TALES OF FOREVER

For comments or questions about this book, visit our website: *The Lost Stories Channel*, at loststorieschannel.com.

© 2016 by W. Kent Smith – All Rights Reserved
Published in the United States by
Lodestar Cinema Creations,
West Covina, California
Smith, W. Kent (1959-)

It should be noted that this book contains exactly the same material from a larger work of the same title, and as such differs only in that this version presents Act One of Three.

Includes Analyses (Part One), Tales, Selected Biographies, Source Material, Footnotes, and Cast of Characters

Front Cover and Title Page Painting: *The Creation of Adam*, Michelangelo, 1512

Front Cover Inset Poem: *Faith*, Ephrem the Syrian, c. 360

Book Exterior and Interior Designed and Executed by W. Kent Smith

All the artwork for this book is in the public domain or is used with permission from the artist, and is therefore not subject to copyright infringement.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without the prior written consent of the publisher, except in brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

ISBN: 978-0-9675869-4-6

Manufactured in the U.S.A.
August 2016

TALES OF FOREVER

The Unfolding Drama of God's Hidden Hand in History

BOOK ONE

The Analyses—Part One

by

W. Kent Smith

Lodestar
Cinema
Creations

Books by W. Kent Smith

Lies My Professor Told Me About American Politics: Questions Concerning the Original Vision of the Founding Fathers

The Joy of Cynicism and the Death of Beauty: How Your Worldview Shapes the World You Live In

On Earth as It is On Heaven: The Promise of America, Technology, and the New Earth, Book One: The Promise of America

The Book of Days: In Search of the 5,500-year Prophecy Given to Adam About the Coming of Christ

The Book of Tales: Stories That Confirm the 5,500-year Prophecy Given to Adam About the Coming of Christ

Fish Tales (From the Belly of the Whale): Fifty of the Greatest Misconceptions Ever Blamed on The Bible, Reel One, The Hook #50-34

Fish Tales (From the Belly of the Whale): Fifty of the Greatest Misconceptions Ever Blamed on The Bible, Reel Two, The Line #33-18

Fish Tales (From the Belly of the Whale): Fifty of the Greatest Misconceptions Ever Blamed on The Bible, Reel Three, The Sinker #17-1

Fish Tales (From the Belly of the Whale): Fifty of the Greatest Misconceptions Ever Blamed on The Bible, The Complete Edition, Hook, Line, and Sinker #50-1

Tales of Forever: The Unfolding Drama of God's Hidden Hand in History, Book One: The Analyses – Part One

Tales of Forever: The Unfolding Drama of God's Hidden Hand in History, Book Two: The Tales – Part One

Tales of Forever: The Unfolding Drama of God's Hidden Hand in History, Book Three: The Tales – Part Two

Tales of Forever: The Unfolding Drama of God's Hidden Hand in History, Book Four: The Analyses – Part Two

Tales of Forever: The Unfolding Drama of God's Hidden Hand in History, The Complete Edition

For Ted,

Best Friend and Dad

CONTENTS

A Case for The Tales *i*

In Our Darkest Hour *1*

A List of the Five *2*

Some Foreword Thinking *4*

Stranger than Fiction - From Out of Nowhere -
The Unfolding Drama - A Spoiler Alert -
The Disclaimer - Roll Call of the Intrepid

ACT ONE

THE PRELUDE

The Hidden Books *25*

This Journey of Discovery - A Body of Wisdom -
Grounds for Exclusion - Its True Spiritual Child -
A Thread of Prophecy - A Word to the Wise

THE ANALYSES

Arguments for Authenticity *44*

The Seed of Truth - The End of Secrecy -
Search for Hidden Treasure - An Improbable Connectivity -
A Peculiar Puzzle - Hidden in Plain Sight

Shadow and Substance *84*

Things to Come - Mining the Depths -
Echoes in Time - Patterns of History

The Stage is Set *120*

Anchor of Faith - A Universal Language -
Milestones of the Millennia - The Author of the Universe -
The Wondrous Circle - Time to Move On

THE TRANSLATION

A Matter of Style *155*

The Latent Message - A Clarity of Language - Of Accents and Idioms - Foreshadow and Payoff

THE INTERLUDE

The Curtain Rises *177*

Impossible Wonders - Centuries of Suppression - The Stuff of Legends - Beyond the Veil

THE CREDITS

Acknowledgments *189*

Selected Biographies *193*

The Discoverers - The Translators - The Scholars

Source Material *201*

Apocryphal - Art - Scholarly - Internet - Film

Permission to Reprint *205*

Cast of Characters *206*

About the Author *216*

A Case for The Tales

I HAVE STUDIED in four seminaries and before that, a leading Christian college, yet never was I introduced to any of the material W. Kent Smith has brought forth here in *Tales of Forever*, a work that sheds light on long-lost truths that the majority of modern Christians know nothing about. God has preserved many things concerning His purposes as well as His indelible fingerprints on history. This book sets out to tell the story of those purposes and of those fingerprints.

My initial interest in *The Tales* was due to my research into a 5,500-year messianic prophecy that I became aware of while studying the Early Church and *The Septuagint*, the Greek translation of *The Old Testament* used by 2nd Temple Judaism and the Early Church. Known as "the prophecy of the Great Five and a Half Days," this messianic prophecy is certainly the greatest promise that God ever gave to mankind. According to this prophecy, given to Adam and Eve when they were expelled from Eden, the Messiah would come to Earth to rescue humanity after 5,500 years.

In addition to my interest concerning this prophecy, I was struck by several questions about 2nd Temple Judaism: What motivated the rabbis in the late first and early second century when they "canonized" *The Hebrew Bible*? Why did *The Septuagint* version of *The Old Testament* have different books from the *Masoretic* Text? And why were so many previously accepted texts, such as *The First Book of Enoch*, completely ignored and excluded? I knew that earlier Jews had had a broader canon of Scripture than the one that the rabbis settled upon at Jamnia, but in many cases, I didn't realize how important these "excluded" books were to understanding so many of our best-known *Bible* stories. Kent's book picks up these themes and digs even deeper, with particular focus upon the 5,500-year prophecy.

According to the 5,500-year chronology of *The Septuagint*, the coming of Jesus perfectly fit the timing of this prophecy and was one of the reasons so many Jews came to believe He was the Messiah. At which time the rabbis proceeded to "tamper" with *The Hebrew Bible* at the end of the first century AD, rejecting *The*

Septuagint, and then translating their "doctored" *Old Testament* into three new Greek versions for future Jewish use. Why? One of the main reasons was to obscure the 5,500-year prophecy in order to stop Jews from coming to Jesus as their Messiah.

Tales of Forever traces several other ways that God supernaturally preserved the record of this prophetic word for humanity. But sadly, due to the ongoing influence of Rabbinic Talmudic Judaism and the unfortunate influence of the likes of Jerome, many Christians not only remain in the dark about this 5,500-year prophecy but also end up dismissing the best extant sources of evidence for its veracity. When one removes such blinders and trusts the testimony of Early Church writers like Justin Martyr and Tertullian, we see, as *Tales of Forever* reveals, that God Himself protected arguably the most significant messianic prophecy of all time. You may not agree with all of the author's conclusions, but I assure you that your "traditions" will be challenged if you allow the evidence he presents through the narratives he tells to inspire you and your faith in the God of *The Bible*.

Just as *First Enoch* serves as an extensive commentary on *Genesis* 6, so too other so-called "apocryphal/pseudepigraphal" books shed much-needed light on aspects of the narratives of Adam and Eve, Abraham and Isaac, and other *Old Testament* patriarchs. Additionally, Kent introduces us to writings from *The New Testament* era that, while well known to the Medieval Church, have been ignored by modern-day Christians due to these works being deemed "non-canonical." Most importantly, these works not only provide greater context to both *Old* and *New Testament* characters and events, but they also further testify to the critical importance of the 5,500-year prophecy.

To inspire millions, movies need to be made about *The Tales*. Following Kent's lead as he depicts events in various works throughout this volume, I propose Enoch as the main character and narrator of one of the greatest stories that has yet to be filmed. Step aside *Lord of the Rings!*

As I told the author when we met, I believe that new evidence is forthcoming that will shed even more light on these issues and convince countless people that the things he contends are in fact true. Of course, only time will tell. But, until then,

read *Tales of Forever* for yourself, and your fascination with God will grow, as will your trust in His promises.

For such a time as this...

Rev. David J. Hess
Rock OC Church
Dana Point, California

Although the contents of the following work are instructive, their sole purpose is not simply to instruct. Instead, they are offered as a catalyst to fuel one's God-given imagination so that the infinite mind of the Word might shed some small part of Himself upon all who dare to embrace a knowledge of the sublime as a child seeks to embrace the ineffable mystery of a clear blue sky.

W.K.S. 4.10.16

In Our Darkest Hour

IT IS SAID *The Bible* contains more than three thousand promises that God has made to humanity. Many are conditional and require a response from the recipients before God keeps those promises, while many are kept unconditionally, regardless of whether the recipients cooperate in their fulfillment.

This is the story of one of those promises that God kept unconditionally, a promise made to Adam and his descendants that was to be the key to unlocking every other promise God would ever make to humanity. As it turns out, it is also a promise of God that involves some of the most overlooked aspects of biblical history. Why?

Because unbeknownst to most modern-day Christians in the West, the men who recorded the events surrounding this fulfilled promise were quoting from the Greek translation of *The Old Testament* called *The Septuagint*. As a result, their understanding of biblical history was far different from ours today.

Case in point, the writers of *The New Testament* believed that the time from Adam to Christ represented a 5,500-year timeline, as opposed to the one inspired by the *King James* Version of *The Bible*, which depicts this time period as being some 4,000 years. Why does that matter?

It matters because this lesser-known timeline of 5,500 years, found in *The Septuagint*, does everything to confirm God's control over history and faithfulness to His word while the traditional 4,000-year time frame does nothing but obscure and nullify another vitally important aspect concerning the most pivotal promise ever made and kept by God in history.

It is the story of this forgotten chapter of biblical history, then, that this book, *Tales of Forever: The Unfolding Drama of God's Hidden Hand in History*, will seek to uncover and illuminate. In the telling of this tale of God's primordial promise, known as the prophecy of the Great Five and a Half Days, the reader will rediscover a long-lost truth regarding the Lord's plan to send humanity a Savior, when in our darkest hour, God provided the most clear-cut proof of His control and faithfulness the world would ever know.

A List of the Five

FIVE THINGS ... five *sacred* things... The Ark of the Covenant, The Spear of Destiny, The Shroud of Turin, The Great Pyramid of Giza, and *The Septuagint Bible*.

Believe it or not, these five things all have one thing in common. And as it turns out, this one thing just happens to provide the key to a startling proof of God's control over every aspect of world history, proof of God's faithfulness to every promise He has ever made to the children of Adam.

Now, just in case there is anyone reading this who does not know what these five things are, let me briefly describe them without bogging down in the endless debate over the authenticity of the various claims made about them:

One, **The Ark of the Covenant**, also known as The Ark of Testimony, is the wooden chest overlaid in gold, in which the Israelites carried the two stone tablets of the Ten Commandments.

Two, **The Spear of Destiny**, also known as The Holy Lance or The Spear of Longinus, is the Roman centurion's spear that pierced the side of Jesus as He hung on the cross.

Three, **The Shroud of Turin**, also known as The Holy Shroud, is the linen burial cloth that bears the image of the resurrected Christ.

Four, **The Great Pyramid of Giza**, also known as *The Bible* in Stone, is the only remaining structure among the Seven Wonders of the World and is said to contain the prophetic history of Scripture in its geometric dimensions.

And five, ***The Septuagint Bible***, also known as *The Greek Old Testament*, is the vernacular translation of *The Hebrew Bible*, produced around 250 B.C., and is the book most often quoted by the writers of *The New Testament*.

To anyone who doubts that God's control and faithfulness can be proved to be a tangible and verifiable fact of life, these five things hold the key to that proof—proof of God's hidden yet potent hand at work throughout the course of human affairs.

Five things … five *sacred* things—and the knowledge they convey—though scattered through time and space, have now, within the pages of this unique book, been pieced together to tell the ultimate tale of God's faithfulness to humanity.

Some Foreword Thinking

Stranger than Fiction

THIS IS A TALE beyond imagination yet true, a tale stranger than any fiction ever conceived by the mind of mankind, because in order to tell the ultimate tale of God's faithfulness to humanity—this tale of five *sacred* things and the knowledge they convey—one must weave together all the elements of the greatest tales ever told.

An ancient prophecy, a promise of "days," which precisely foretold the Advent of Christ, given to the primordial parents of our race and recorded in the oldest story contained in the biblical record—a prophecy that bears a striking similarity to the messianic chronology found in *The Septuagint Bible*, the book most often quoted by the writers of *The New Testament*. But as so often happens, this most ancient of all stories, and a knowledge of the prophecy it contained, eventually fell out of favor in the wake of certain political movements and was swept away, not to be seen again in the West for over a thousand years.

One man, set apart from all others, who was said to have talked with God, face to face, having a conversation that took place not in any earthly realm but at the very pinnacle of Heaven itself—a conversation written in a book for all humanity to read. Yet because of its startling and enigmatic message, it was deemed unsuitable for viewing by the common people, so sometime in the latter half of the fourth century of the Christian Era, it was banned and afterward thought lost by most of the world for more than a millennium.

And an array of sacred artifacts, each one a talisman said to emanate an uncanny power to affect the hearts and minds of those who encountered them. Although every one of these objects appear insignificant at first glance, according to legend, they are all more potent than any man-made weapon—The Ark of the Covenant, The Spear of Destiny, and The Shroud of Turin. The other object amongst this array, however, is not so much an artifact as it is a colossus of a structure—The Great Pyramid of Giza.

All these elements, then—a man and his heavenly conversation, a promise of "days," an ark, a spear, a shroud, a pyramid, and a book, that is to say, everything needed to demonstrate a startling proof of God's faithfulness—have for the first time been forged into a single storyline, to tell the *Tales of Forever: The Unfolding Drama of God's Hidden Hand in History*.

From Out of Nowhere

BUT BEFORE I BEGIN, one would do well to keep several important points in mind as we proceed with the telling of this tale of five *sacred* things, of the special connection they hold in common, and the startling proof this connection conveys to an onlooking world—a proof that naturally has its origins in the written record of Scripture. And rest assured, although readers of this work will find themselves on a firm foundation of biblical truth, the process of investigating these origins will undoubtedly challenge their traditional view of *The Bible* as it is known today in the West. This is because a fundamental requirement in penetrating the veil that hides the truth concerning these five things is that one must first be willing to venture into territory familiar only to those who have encountered such works as *The Septuagint Bible*, one of the earliest known vernacular translations of *The Old Testament*—one of several books that, as we will soon be discovering, have all, at various times throughout their history, fallen in and out of favor.

This leads us, then, to important point number one: Throughout the entire course of history, the process of choosing which books were to be considered "acceptable" has been a veritable roller coaster of political correctness. As much as we would like to believe otherwise, the harsh reality is that the primary factor in deeming certain books as either inspired or heretical has been based not so much on matters of personal conscience as it has been on which political system was in power at a particular time and place. Still, this does not mean that these decision makers have always been able to enforce their political will in all places and at all times. More importantly, when it comes to the history of the formation of the Biblical Canon, what we are dealing with is, and always will be, an international struggle of global proportions. Ever since the Great Schism

of the eleventh century, the Orthodox Church has occupied the East, while the Catholic and Protestant branches of Christianity have occupied the West. And because of this, the fact that some books are said to have been rejected and excised actually means that they were—contrary to popular opinion—not so much lost as they were marginalized and subsequently forgotten by a specific geographical segment of Christendom.[1] This overriding fact, in turn, has several consequences that are critical to this present-day study, both of which have occurred as a direct result of the point of view of this work, which happens to be a Western Protestant one.

Important point number two that emerges from this admittedly Western view is that when we speak—as we often will in this work—about lost books, lost chronologies, and lost truths of *The Bible*, keep in mind that we are not implying that these things have ever been lost in the strictest sense of that word. What we are really saying is that they simply lost their foothold in the West, while remaining part and parcel of the orthodoxy in the East; or in some cases, what fell out of favor in the Protestant West held fast in the Catholic West. This more than anything else accounts for the apparently sensational aspect of the so-called "discovery" of manuscripts, all which had generally been thought to be lost forever.

It is also critical to realize—important point number three—that this sort of thing is not at all unusual in terms of the overall landscape of biblical history. The same idea undergirds our understanding of the so-called Lost Tribes of Israel. Although the northern kingdom of ancient Israel was punished and scattered throughout the nations, they were never truly lost in the sense of their having been totally annihilated; rather, they were driven "underground," so to speak. In fact, the prophet Hosea clearly spoke about this very thing, in that the ten tribes to the north were to be punished for their idolatrous ways but only for a divinely appointed period of time, after which they were to reappear upon the stage of world history, as if from out of nowhere.

This, in turn, brings us to important point number four. I am one who firmly believes that this same phenomenon is at work

1 *The Many Faces of Christ: The Thousand-Year Story of the Survival and Influence of the Lost Gospels*, Philip Jenkins, pp. 6-7

when we as a Western people, dominated by a Protestant view of the Biblical Canon, are now the recipients of lost books that have all been—according to God's set time—rediscovered and restored to the West after centuries of having been deprived of their contents. And rather than scoff at such a possibility, one might humbly reconsider it in light of the facts that come forth from an in-depth examination of these various manuscripts, many of which will prove to be more than capable of standing side by side with the traditional books of Scripture, as we will shortly demonstrate.

And finally, for important point number five. Unlike those who profess to believe in God's ability to protect His written revelation but reject the great antiquity alleged by the authors of that record, this writer believes that when *The Bible* declares that men like Enoch, the scribe—that is, *the writer*—received a message from God, which Enoch conveyed in books, that declaration should be accepted. Furthermore, if the biblical record states that these books were written prior to the Great Flood, then I, for one, have no problem believing that other books were also written many centuries before typical scholarship has been willing to admit. After all, is it not written: In the beginning was the Word, and through the same Word, the entire Universe was created?[2] How absurd, then, to relinquish the inevitable conclusion that if the Word of God communicated His truth to not only Enoch but also Adam before him and Abraham after him that the end result of those communications would not have produced some form of written record. Therefore, it is with all the preceding ideas in mind that I now carry on with this tale of five *sacred* things, with the unfolding drama of God's hidden hand in history, that is to say, with *The Tales* that are … forever.

The Unfolding Drama

IN 1650, ARCHBISHOP James Ussher published one of the most influential biblical chronologies ever set forth as the unassailable word of God. By using texts in *The Book of Genesis*, together with other passages from Scripture, Ussher calculated that the world was created on the 23rd day of October, in the year 4,004 B.C. To this day, most Christians would never

2 *John* 1:1-3

think to dispute such a finding, and if ever challenged would undoubtedly defend this "fact" to the death, not knowing why, other than that it had been included in so many copies of their *Bible*. But sadly, as well-intentioned as these defenders of the faith are, they may, upon further review of all things scriptural, actually be defending a proverbial Trojan horse.

Nearly lost to history is the knowledge that long before Archbishop Ussher offered his chronology as the "gospel truth," there was already another chronological system that had been universally accepted for the first fifteen centuries of Christendom. This chronology, derived from *The Septuagint Bible*, adhered to a 5,500-year period from the Fall of Adam to the Advent of Christ. And though it had withstood the test of time for so many centuries, it ultimately fell victim to one of the most ironic twists in history and was replaced by a more politically correct translation, which influenced all subsequent versions of *The English Bible* as we know it today. So, with *The Septuagint* having been officially relegated to the dustbin of apocryphal literature, the way was unwittingly paved for Ussher's "new and improved" chronology—one that most biblical scholars will admit is at odds with every known historical account, both Jewish and Christian.

Of course *The Septuagint* was not the first book to have suffered the wrath of ecclesiastical scorn. Included in the halls of the similarly excised were such legendary texts as those ascribed to Enoch, the man who famously walked and talked with God. And though one can assume that the truths conveyed in that conversation might be of great interest, this natural human curiosity was summarily short-circuited when religious authorities, declaring these books unsuitable for common folk, banned them. Such are the perpetual tug of wars—theologically-speaking—that have plagued the entire history of *The Bible* so that what was once perfectly acceptable is almost overnight deemed an object of holy revulsion. As a result, many of the world's most revered manuscripts, rejected and suppressed, have sadly been lost to history forever … or so it would seem.

It is to the tumultuous story of these lost books, lost chronologies, and lost truths, then, that this work will turn in an effort to shed new light on what I believe to be the ultimate tale of God's intention toward humanity. To do so, this book—unlike

any other that deals with such subjects as scriptural interpretation, biblical chronology, and religious artifacts—will not only offer evidence from history but also from the very books that have, down through the ages, generated so much derision and controversy. By analyzing the historical and theological validity of texts like those penned by the likes of Enoch, the scribe, as well as inviting the reader to peruse several of them in their entirety, *Tales of Forever* will provide a unique window into our biblical past. And in the process, even the layperson will be able to judge for themselves what has, for so very long, been the exclusive domain of the elite and the scholar, the esoteric and the clandestine.

Consequently, readers will find themselves on an unprecedented journey in which the traditional notions concerning the so-called *Lost Books of The Bible* are turned completely upside down. What appears to be one of the great failures of history will, within the pages of this book, be portrayed not as having occurred in spite of God's best efforts to reveal His truth but as a direct result of His desire to hide it. No doubt Solomon had this in mind when he uttered his proverb: "God in His greatness has concealed many things, while kings have the honor of discovering them."[3] Simply put, in order to fully apprehend the manifold truths of Scripture—particularly as they pertain to the five *sacred* things and the proof of God's control and faithfulness that they convey—one must come to grips with a peculiar paradox: In the course of the unfolding drama of history, God has made it abundantly clear that He is far less concerned with how obvious He has made the truth than with how artfully He has hidden it in plain sight.

A Spoiler Alert

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT: This is a concept you will hear a lot about in this book. What is more, you will not only be told what it means—that is, in the context of this particular work—but you will also be challenged to test your own skills of discernment in the process. The reason for this is because this book just happens to be one that was written to both expound and conceal the truth at the same time. Naturally, you may wonder why

3 *Proverbs* 25:2

I would do something that seems so blatantly contradictory, but before you judge me too harshly, please understand one more very important point. I am not doing this out of some twisted desire on my part. In my own defense, I am doing this because what I am writing about is, itself, a thing that is hidden in plain sight. In fact, it is nothing less than the unveiling of a heretofore hidden drama of the ages, the true nature of which we, like an audience sitting in a darkened theater, are scarcely aware of, even as we are watching it on the screen. To be sure, we are all participants of this living drama, yet the vast majority of us who are playing our part are doing so without ever appreciating the extent to which it is being orchestrated by none other than God Himself, the Ultimate Director of human history. And just as the story of the Lord's redemptive drama is one that is artfully hidden in plain sight, this work endeavors to mirror this same quality.

Therefore, the real story contained in this work—that is, the unveiling of God's control and faithfulness conveyed in the five *sacred* things—has been written as a story-within-a-story concerning the lost truths, lost chronologies, and lost books of our collective biblical past. And because of my acute awareness of this paradoxical nature of the divine drama, I, too, have sought to maintain a similarly delicate balance between the two equal but opposite forces that seek to expound as well as conceal its essential meaning. As such, I have attempted to design this book in such a way that it might adequately communicate the truth for the sake of a genuinely open-minded audience, while at the same time not trying too hard to convey it to an admittedly cynical one.

That said, I wish to introduce this book with the following explanation. The book you are reading is not one book but two. Ordinarily, a book is classified as being either a work of nonfiction or fiction, with the first kind of book reading like a documentary, and the second, like a movie. In this way, every book is written specifically for one segment of the population as opposed to another. However, this one was not. To my knowledge, no book has ever been written that contains elements of nonfiction and fiction in equal balance; that is, until this one, which was written to meet the twin demands of the readers of scholarly and dramatic narratives alike. Therefore, let the read-

er of this work be advised: There is more than one way to read it. What does that mean? It means that, because this book was written with both skeptics and believers in mind, the kind of person you are will determine your approach to the material in it. If you are the critical type who has to know all the behind-the-scene facts of a given scenario, then by all means you should read this book from start to finish. If, however, you are the carefree sort who prefers to avoid sweating the details, then feel free to skip *The Prelude* and *The Analyses*. In your case, you will only need to read the two sections entitled *The Translation* and *The Interlude* before moving on to *The Tales*.

But keep in mind, it does not mean that one approach to reading this book is any better than another. It just means that it was written to anticipate more than a single mindset. Put another way, some people are only inclined to crack open a history book about, say, the American World War II general George Patton after seeing a movie about him, while others would only think to read a novel about him after watching a documentary on the subject. The main thing—as far as I am concerned—is to, once and for all, introduce this all-too-often taboo subject to a much broader audience after having been confined to such a narrow one for so long. If this happens, then at least I will have accomplished the one thing any writer hopes for when attempting to interest an audience in historical events or characters: People from every walk of life will finally look for themselves upon a subject that has generally been confined to the darkened rooms of the cloistered and cryptic.

It is also important to note that when I say this book supplies the reader with a dramatic narrative in addition to a scholarly one, it should not be assumed that this narrative is entirely fictional in nature. Far from presenting mere fiction, what this book does, in fact, is to expand the original narratives found in the ancient documents we will examine in terms of everything that a full-blown dramatization has to offer. This, of course, I have done in accord with what I previously alluded to. Whereas all other books on extra-biblical texts seek to dissect their subject matter in such a way that the reader never has a chance to experience their contents in the same context that was intended by the original authors, this book will provide that opportunity by presenting the stories as complete narratives.

However, just in case there is anyone out there who insists that this is a most unscholarly approach to such a scholastically demanding subject, I have also included what I believe to be a thoroughly systematic analysis as well, specifically presented for the sake of the more investigative segment of the audience. This systematic documentation is what has been provided in *The Prelude* and *The Analyses* sections before and after *The Tales* themselves. The only drawback to this more penetrating approach is that it does come with a spoiler alert. That is to say, in order to convey the historical and theological significance of the manuscripts presented in this work, it was necessary to discuss the narratives in their entirety, and because of this, certain plot points in the stories have unavoidably been "given away" in the process.

So, to review one's approach to reading this book: Are you the kind of person who needs some convincing before you are comfortable taking a leap of faith? Do you prefer more of a documentary approach to your subject matter? If so, you should read *The Prelude* and *The Analyses* before *The Tales*, even though you will be subjected to the occasional plot spoiler. Or, are you someone who enjoys solving a good puzzle on your own? Would you rather let the movie "do its own talking," as it were? If so, you only need to read *The Translation* and *The Interlude* before moving on to *The Tales*. Then, after you have been sufficiently tantalized by first reading the narratives, take the time to peruse *The Prelude* and *The Analyses* before and after *The Tales*. I guarantee you will not regret it, particularly if you are one who hopes to solve the mystery of what connects the five *sacred* things. Still, either way you go, realize this: Whether you embark on this journey as a confirmed skeptic or as a true believer, every aspect of this multifaceted work will provide something special for your unique literary palette.

The Disclaimer

I WOULD ALSO LIKE to insert a disclaimer before I begin, which I feel is necessary because of the sensitive areas of knowledge into which a work like this delves. In order to present the material in its proper light, one must go into detail concerning the history of such controversial subjects as scriptural interpre-

tation, biblical chronology, and religious artifacts, subjects that are still fraught by impassioned debates to this very day. As a result of this historical presentation, one inevitably runs the risk of stepping on numerous theological "toes," as it were.

Without a doubt, the following story involves just as many villains as it does heroes, and consequently, like all great stories, its villainous elements are often more intriguing—and therefore more interesting—than its heroic ones. Due to this ironic nature of storytelling, it is all too tempting to swing the sword of blame and accusation, especially when it comes to a story like this one that involves so many negative forces and characters. In order to tell the whole truth about the age-old controversy of why certain biblical books, chronologies, or truths were either sanctioned or banned, the story could never be written without having to insist that someone was "at fault" for having made a decision that was deemed unwarranted by some political or religious entity. As contemplative, questioning creatures, we simply cannot avoid this very real dilemma. For every controversial issue in life, one can only confront the pros and cons of a given subject, and therefore, it is only natural to land on one side of the fence or the other.

My real concern, however, with this completely normal response, is the lengths to which some people will go to prove their point. By that I mean, if history teaches us anything about the debates that mankind is inevitably drawn into—especially when it comes to theological issues encountered in books like this—the quest for truth sometimes becomes so important that the participants lose sight of their original goals. In such a case, truth is no longer important, and the humble realization that we are all mere humans, reaching to know the unknowable, is swept aside. What began as a holy cause soon escalates into a holy war. Winning the argument, then, becomes the only goal, because it is often easier to appear the winner of the debate, while at the same time never coming one iota closer to the truth, which was the actual purpose for engaging in the quest in the first place.

As a matter of fact, this seems to me to be at the heart of every war that is waged in the name of "religion," or "truth," or "God," or whatever one chooses to call it, and it is this kind of thing that, above all else, I am committed to renouncing with

every ounce of my being. Therefore, the contents of this book should never be construed as an effort on my part to deride any particular doctrine of faith, which I believe—as I am sure every true American believes—is a matter of strictest conscience, and as such is off-limits to criticism by anyone.

This, then, is the essence of my disclaimer. To anyone who reads the present volume of *Analyses* and *Tales*, please keep in mind that I bear no ill will toward any person or group of persons, even while trying my best to present what I believe to be the unbiased facts that are central to this story. Just because certain individuals made decisions—as a result of their heartfelt convictions—that certain books should be excised from the Canon of Scripture and therefore suppressed from public circulation, does not mean that I hold those people to be evil or deluded. No one but God, I believe, is qualified to make such a judgment. Similarly, I feel no animosity or hatred toward any religion or denomination just because I point out from history that those who excised certain books belonged to a specific religious group.

And the reason I feel this is never an option is because of my own view on the nature of truth as I perceive it to be revealed in *The Bible* and by the One Who is the final arbitrator of the truth contained in it. To the best of my knowledge, I have never known the Jesus that I see in Scripture to have ever condemned an individual *per se*. What I do see Him condemning are the attitudes and beliefs of certain ones that have their origin in what can best be described as institutionally-oriented, or, to put it another way, system-oriented mindsets. In other words, Jesus seems less concerned with condemning individual sinners and more interested in attacking the root source of what keeps those people spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually imprisoned by the state of sin into which all humans are naturally born. Simply put, Jesus does not condemn people; He condemns institutions, or systems.

Now, before you insist that what I have just proposed is too absurd to believe, and you do so based on the idea that only people and not institutions or systems can go to Heaven or Hell, please keep the following in mind. There is an old adage, attributed to one Lord Acton, which states: Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Of this very thing Abra-

ham Lincoln spoke when he wisely observed: "Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character give him power." If there is any truth to such statements, then what follows is also likely to be true: No individual in the history of mankind, that I know of, has ever been corrupted by power while living alone on a desert island. It is therefore axiomatic that the power that both Acton and Lincoln were referring to is power that can only be exerted by an individual who exists within the matrix of an institution or system, whether it is political, economic, or religious in nature.

Now, mind you, I am not trying to say that individual humans are sinless just because they withdraw from the world and live on a desert island; that, sadly, is the fallacy of living the life of a hermit. What I am saying, though, is what any social psychologist will tell you. The typical individual left to his or her own devices is benign, but when you thrust that same individual into a decidedly hostile group, even if the sentiments and proclivities of that group are very different from that of the individual, a person will eventually succumb to the herd mentality and align themselves with the attitudes and beliefs of that group. Therein lies the logic of Jesus not condemning people so much as the system or institution that indoctrinates people with the attitudes or beliefs that He does condemn.

To see how all of this applies to the teachings of Scripture one need only turn to the words and actions of Jesus Himself. When the Pharisees came to Him demanding a sign to prove that He was the Messiah, Jesus flatly informed them: "An evil and adulterous generation insists on seeking signs, but none will be given to it except the sign of Jonah."[4] First, notice how Jesus did not point an accusing finger at any of those individuals who were standing right in front of Him. Was it because He was too timid to accuse any single individual from within the group? Was He unsure of exactly who were the guilty ones among the demanding crowd? I hardly think so. What we have is simply a clear-cut example of what I am trying to point out. Jesus was less concerned about condemning individuals and more concerned with warning them about the kinds of attitudes and beliefs that they should avoid—attitudes and beliefs that only come as a result of associating with the institutions and

4 *Matthew* 12:38-39

systems that are united by like-minded individuals.

This becomes all the more evident when one takes the time to notice that Jesus did not say that a sign would be withheld from "them," that is, those "individuals" who made up the group that was addressing Him. What He did say was that a sign would be withheld from "it," that is, the "generation" that was demanding a sign from Him, which constitutes the world system, or present order. The same idea is expressed when Jesus spoke concerning those who believed in Him. "If you were of the world, the world would love you, but because you're not, the world hates you."[5] The Greek word being used here for "world" is *kosmos*, the word we transliterate directly into English as *cosmos*, a word that literally means "something ordered," as in an "ordered system." So what we see here is Jesus choosing to condemn a world system that is alien to His way of thinking, as opposed to targeting the individuals who had fallen victim to that system by virtue of their simply being born into it.

Next, we see that when Jesus came to the Temple at Jerusalem, He famously drove out those who were buying and selling there, even going so far as to overturn the tables of the moneychangers. "It is written," He bellowed, "My house will be called a house of prayer, but you've turned it into a den of thieves!"[6] What does this mean in the context of what I am trying to articulate by way of this disclaimer? Was Jesus condemning the people for the way they were presenting their offerings to God? Was He angry at the act of their buying and selling, as if one could actually buy or sell the favor of God with mere money? If so, then who did Jesus hold to be of greater guilt? Those who bought? Or those who sold? But, as usual, such a surface-oriented interpretation would miss the point entirely. Certainly, it was no more in the nature of Jesus to be angry with those buying or selling, any more than a doctor is angry with a patient for being sick. Undoubtedly, what disgusted Him was the fact that what had begun as a God-given impulse, that is, the desire to offer sacrifice to the Lord, had over time succumbed to the humanly-inspired forces that had crept in and undermined the original divinely-instituted purpose of giving the burnt of-

5 *John* 15:19
6 *Matthew* 21:12-13

fering. In other words, He was angry because what had begun as a sublime expression of a single heart offered to God had devolved as a result of the machinations of an institutionally-inspired system.

This same process can be seen repeatedly down through the corridors of history, like "*déjà vu* all over again," as it were. The Lord of the Harvest calls individual men and women of faith, who, in turn, teach their children the ways of God. In time, however, and always over the span of several generations, the ways of God are slowly but surely subverted, and in their place a mere shell of their original intention is all that remains. In the end, the faith of "the one" has become the dogma of "the institution," which then creates a situation where God, as He does in every age, seeks the next individual who will heed the call in order to initiate the process all over again.

Therefore, when I attempt to convey the history of who decided which books should be excised from the Canon of Scripture, and in doing so, I quote certain ones who claim that "this person" belonging to "that religious group" made those decisions, remember I prefer to take to higher ground. And remember I, too, am less concerned by the actions of individuals and more interested in the process of institutionalization, which is constantly at work to undermine the original greatness of said person or group. In this, everyone is equally guilty or innocent, however the case may be, whether they are called Sethites, Semites, Hebrews, Israelites, Jews, Pharisees, Christians, Catholics, Protestants, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Fundamentalists, *et al*.

In short, all these designations, in my view, are just like everything else in this God-ordained Universe of ours, which is to say, they are merely representative of both sides of the same coin. They are good when they willingly cooperate with the good as proscribed by the dictates of the One Who inspired their creation, and they are bad when they willingly succumb to the forces that forever seek to subvert the dictates of that same One. And because of this ironic nature of the human dilemma, I, for one, choose not to assign guilt or condemnation in regard to any of their particular actions; I only seek to report, impartially and with malice toward none.

Roll Call of the Intrepid

THE LAST THING I have to do before beginning is to express my gratitude to the intrepid pioneers who provided the core narratives for this work. Just in case anyone thinks that I have concocted the following storyline entirely on my own, I would like to offer this list of discoverers, translators, and scholars whose monumental contributions have provided the biblical texts that form its backbone. For a more in-depth look at their lives and accomplishments, please refer to the *Selected Biographies* section in *The Credits*.

Among the discoverers who have restored to the world such an unexpected array of lost manuscripts, there are: Johann Grynaeus (1540-1617), a Swiss Protestant divine, professor of *The New Testament*, and collector of biblical manuscripts; Giuseppe Assemani (1687-1768), a Lebanese Orientalist and Vatican librarian; James Bruce (1730-1794), a Scottish explorer and travel writer; and E.A. Wallis Budge (1857-1934), a British Egyptologist, Orientalist, philologist, and author.

Among the translators who have turned many of these manuscripts into works that could be understood by an English-speaking world, there are: William Wake (1657-1737), a British clergyman, dean at Exeter, bishop at Lincoln, and archbishop of Canterbury; Richard Laurence (1760-1838), a British Hebraist, Anglican churchman, and regius professor of Hebrew at Oxford; Moses Samuel (1795-1860), a British author and translator of Hebrew works; S.C. Malan (1812-1894), a British biblical scholar and linguist of Oriental languages; William Wright (1830-1889), a British Orientalist and professor of Arabic at Cambridge; B. Harris Cowper (1822-1904), a British archeologist, historian, and translator; W.R. Morfill (1834-1909), a British professor of Slavonic languages at Oxford; and R.H. Charles (1855-1931), an Irish biblical scholar and theologian.

Among the scholars who invested their considerable skill and effort into making the various manuscripts accessible to the general population, there are: Theophilus of Antioch (c. 120-181), a Syrian theologian, apologist, author, and chronologist; Julius Africanus (c. 160-240), a Libyan historian, traveler, and chronologist; Hippolytus of Rome (c. 170-235), a Greek theologian, apologist, and chronologist; Ephrem the Syrian (c.

306-373), a theologian, deacon, and hymn writer; Giambattista Vico (1668-1744), an Italian historian, political philosopher, and apologist of classical antiquity; George Smith (1800-1868), a British historian, theologian, and author; Joseph A. Seiss (1823-1904), an American theologian, Lutheran minister, and author; E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913), a British clergyman and theologian; Louis Ginzberg (1873-1953), a Lithuanian professor of Judaism and Talmudist; Edgar J. Goodspeed (1871-1962), an American theologian and scholar of Greek and *The New Testament*; and Cyrus H. Gordon (1908-2001), an American biblical scholar and professor of ancient Near East culture and languages.

Thanks to the visionary efforts of "so great a cloud of witnesses," then, I hereby present the following work; I now present *Tales of Forever: The Unfolding Drama of God's Hidden Hand in History*.

ACT ONE

The great fragments of antiquity, previously useless to science because they lay neglected, broken, and scattered, shed great light when cleaned, pieced together, and set into place.

Giambattista Vico, *New Science*

THE PRELUDE

The important fact is … that for 700 years after the commencement of the Christian Era … the average estimation of the period from Adam to Christ was some 5,500 years.

Nathan Rouse, *A Dissertation on Sacred Chronology*

The Hidden Books

This Journey of Discovery

IN A WORLD WHERE evil so often triumphs over good, several burning questions linger in the face of such tragedy and despair. Is the God of *The Bible* really in control of human history as the Scriptures declare? And if He is, does He actually keep His promises to mankind? Fortunately for us, these first two questions are inexorably bound together, and they are bound in the following manner. God's control over history is clearly confirmed in direct proportion to His faithfulness to the promises He has made to humanity. In other words, in order to verify that God is in control, all one need do is confirm that He is faithful to the promises He makes. This leads us, then, to the next question, which is: Where does one look to confirm God's faithfulness to His word of promise? Naturally, the obvious solution to a problem framed this way would be: I guess one finds the answer in *The Bible*, right? Needless to say, though, as both believers and skeptics have discovered, such a straightforward solution is much more elusive than that. To begin with, one must first ask: To which promise of God should we look to confirm this faithfulness? And having decided upon which promise, how do we go about establishing a clear-cut way to determine whether or not God has kept that promise?

To that end, it would be useful to focus our quest. By that I mean that, out of the countless promises that fill the pages of Holy Writ, it would help if we could narrow down our choice. Fortunately, we do have the Apostle Paul to assist us in this matter. Speaking of Jesus, in his letter to the Corinthians, Paul said, "For all the promises of God find their 'yes' in Him."[7] Or as Weymouth's *New Testament* puts it: "All the promises of God, whatever their number, have their confirmation in Him."[8] In other words, if one were to gather together every promise that God has ever made to His people, they could all be confirmed by the fact that His Son came into this world to live and die and

7 *Second Corinthians* 1:20
8 Ibid. 1:20

resurrect just as had been predicted. Therefore, if this Advent of Christ can be adequately confirmed, then—based on this verse in *Corinthians*—every other promise in the book can be counted on as well.

That said, it should be the mission of every student of Scripture to determine the extent to which the promises of God have been fulfilled in the Incarnation of Christ. Admittedly, this is not the easiest thing to do, considering all the roadblocks that stand in the way of one's quest for historical certainty. However, just because it is a difficult task does not mean that it is an impossible one. After all, although there are many pitfalls along the way, the God of *The Bible* does not hesitate to beckon us onward in this journey of discovery. Therefore, if one can appreciate that it is God Himself Who is guiding our quest, then it should come as no surprise that He is also the One Who has provided sufficient signposts to help us along the way.

With this in mind, one simply turns to the various ways in which *The Bible* portrays the manifestation of Christ in history, right? To which I must confess that—for me, at least—this is where things get a little tricky. Let me take a moment to explain what I mean by that.

A Body of Wisdom

NATURALLY, SPEAKING as I am from an admittedly Christian frame of reference, I do look to *The Bible* as one of several sources for such evidence—that is, the traditional *Bible*. But notice how I said the traditional *Bible*. The reason I say this is because after more than forty years of research, I have become convinced that there is another source of God-inspired wisdom that is just as capable of confirming the truth of the divine promise concerning the Advent of Christ. Make no mistake, though, I am not referring to any literary source that has not, at one point or another, been considered part of Holy Scripture. On the contrary, what I am referring to are books that were once considered inspired by God but which have, over the course of time, been excised from the canon of so-called "accepted texts," generally for reasons that seem more motivated by the whims of politics than by the dictates of conscience.

I am referring to a body of ancient wisdom literature that

has come to be known in modern parlance as the *pseudepigraphal* books of *The Bible*. *Pseudepigrapha*—chances are if you are neither a biblical scholar nor an archeology professor you may not even know what this word means or what it implies. According to the dictionary, the word is derived from two Greek words, *pseudo*, which means "false," and *epigraphein*, which means to "inscribe," thus, "to write falsely." By that definition, any book considered *pseudepigraphal* is one that is believed to be a "falsely attributed work," that is to say, a work that erroneously purports to be written by some noteworthy biblical personage. As such, any book labeled as *pseudepigrapha* is to be discounted as being outside of the canon of books that have been deemed truly inspired by God. In addition to labeling these books as *pseudepigrapha*, they are often designated as "apocryphal" literature because a number of these titles remain in a separate section of *The Catholic Bible* and *The Greek Orthodox Bible* called *The Apocrypha*. Among these books are *The Wisdom of Solomon*, *The Epistle of Jeremiah*, *The Prayer of Manasseh*, *The Book of Judith*, and *The Second Book of Esdras*.

It is one of the great tragedies, in fact, in the history of *The Bible* that there is so much ignorance in regard to the peculiar assumption that we as a Western Protestant people received our Canon of Scripture like some hermetically-sealed document handed down from On-High. Fortunately, though, for the sake of those with the courage to examine this critical aspect of history, the work of intrepid scholars has greatly aided in dispelling such myopic thinking. Among them are Cyrus H. Gordon, professor of ancient Near East studies at Brandeis University, whose work shed much-needed new light on this age-old controversy. Said Gordon:

> *The Bible* is of a complex composition, varying in scope according to the different ecclesiastical bodies. The Samaritans include only the Five Books of Moses in their *Bible*, and it is evident from *The Dead Sea Scrolls* that before the start of the Christian Era *The Pentateuch* was the most stabilized part of the Hebrew Scripture. Normative Judaism embraces the conventional *Pentateuch*, *Prophets*, and *Hagiographa* of the familiar *Old Testament*. *The Septuagint*, however, is far more inclusive, contain-

> ing as it does, *Apocrypha* and *Pseudepigrapha*. Qumranite and other sectarian Jews possessed still other sacred writings. *Protestant Bibles* usually contain the normative *Jewish Old Testament* plus *The New Testament*; *Catholic Bibles* have, in addition, *The Apocryphal Books*. Various Eastern Orthodox Churches include different *Pseudepigrapha*. Accordingly, there is no one biblical corpus; and the component books of either *Testament* are in many cases extremely heterogeneous individually.[9]

Concerning the variegated process of the formation of our *Protestant Bible*, Edgar J. Goodspeed, described as "America's greatest *New Testament* scholar,"[10] pointed out:

> *The Apocrypha* formed an integral part of the *King James* Version of 1611, as had all the preceding English versions from their beginning in 1382. But they are seldom printed as part of it any longer, still more seldom as part of the *English Revised* Version, and were not included in the American revision.
>
> This is partly because the Puritans disapproved of them; they had already begun to drop them from printings of their *Geneva Bible* by 1600, and began to demand copies of the *King James* Version omitting them as early as 1629… We moderns discredit them because they were not part of *The Hebrew Bible*, and most of them have never been found in any Hebrew forms at all.
>
> But they were part of *The Bible* of the early Church, for it used the *Greek* Version of *The Jewish Bible*, which we call *The Septuagint*, and these books were all in that version. They passed from it into Latin and the great Latin *Bible* edited by St. Jerome about 400 A.D., *The Vulgate*, which became the authorized *Bible* of Western Europe and England, and remained so for a thousand years. But Jerome found that they were not in *The Hebrew Bible*, and so he called them *Apocrypha*, the hidden, or secret, books.[11]

---

9 *The Common Background of Greek and Hebrew Civilizations*, Cyrus H. Gordon, p. 278

10 *Edgar Johnson Goodspeed: Articulate Scholar*, James I. Cook, p. X

11 *The Apocrypha: An American Translation*, Edgar J. Goodspeed, p. v

The Apocrypha, however, does not contain all of the books included in the pantheon of apocryphal literature. Most notable among the other titles are *The First Book of Adam and Eve*, *The First Book of Enoch*, *The Secrets of Enoch*, *The Book of Jasher*, *The Book of Jubilees*, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, *The Letters of Herod and Pilate*, and *The Gospel of Nicodemus*.

Grounds for Exclusion

OVER THE YEARS many reasons have been offered to justify the rejection of any book that is no longer found in many of our modern versions of *The Bible*. Chief among them are: One, they were written under assumed names; two, they contain historical errors; three, they were not quoted by Jesus; and four, they contain no prophetic elements. Yet ironically, these same objections, which seem to confirm the correctness of rejecting the apocryphal books, have also been leveled against the very books that reside in the accepted Canon of Scripture.

For example, regarding *The Pentateuch*, or the first five books of *The Old Testament*, critics have often doubted the Mosaic authorship of *The Book of Genesis*. As their argument goes: While the last four books could have been written by Moses by virtue of the fact that he lived during the years described by the text, he certainly could not have been around to witness the events depicted in the first book. Yet according to most biblical scholars: "Long before the first century A.D., Moses was declared the author of *Genesis*, and Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian, in keeping with this tradition, accepted Mosaic authorship."[12]

Still other books in *The Old Testament* have had their authorship called into question, such as *Isaiah*, *Ezekiel*, and *Daniel*. Because they so precisely predict future events, these books, critics insist, must have been published after the fact and therefore must have been written under assumed names. Similarly, certain books in *The New Testament* have in recent times come under fire concerning their genuine authorship. Most notably are those attributed to the Apostles Peter and Paul. According to much modern-day scholarship, both epistles of Peter and several letters of Paul were allegedly written as amalgamations by

12 *The Criswell Study Bible*, W.A. Criswell (Editor), p. 1

authors other than the ones to which Scripture has subscribed. Yet the simple fact is, though the identities of many of the best-known biblical authors remain subject to such doubt and speculation, the books that bear their names are still regarded as integral to *The Holy Bible*.

As far as rejecting certain books because they contain historical errors, again I should point out that this same argument applies to texts well within the accepted limits of scriptural sanctity. And again one need only turn to the first book in Scripture to prove my point, because as many biblical scholars are well aware it has been a longstanding bone of contention that the account of Noah's gathering of the animals into the Ark contains two contradictory versions. In one rendition, the animals enter in pairs,[13] while in another, they enter in groups of seven.[14]

The same thing occurs in *The New Testament* regarding Judas Iscariot, whose infamous demise is reported in two separate yet contradictory accounts. In *Matthew*, it is said that a grief-stricken Judas hung himself after betraying Jesus,[15] while Acts has him falling headlong into a field and being disemboweled in the process.[16] Naturally, scholars are quick to point out the various ways in which such contradictions can be logically reconciled, and justifiably so. Yet this still does not change the fact that there are obvious contradictions to be found in the received texts, which if they were found in books that critics were seeking to excise would be considered clear grounds for exclusion.

Its True Spiritual Child

AS FOR THE CLAIM that Jesus never quoted from any of the apocryphal books, one need only consider *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* to undermine such an objection. R.H. Charles, in his scholarly work on pseudepigraphal literature, said this about *The Testaments*:

> Its ethical teaching has achieved a real immortality by influencing the thought and diction of the writers of *The*

13 *Genesis* 6:19-20
14 Ibid. 7:2-3
15 *Matthew* 27:5
16 *Acts* 1:18

> *New Testament*, and even those of our Lord. This ethical teaching, which is very much higher and purer than that of *The Old Testament*, is yet its true spiritual child, and helps to bridge the chasm that divides *The Old Testament* and *The New Testament*.
>
> The instances of the influence of these writings on *The New Testament* are notable in the Sermon on the Mount, which reflects the spirit and even uses phrases from these *Testaments*. Saint Paul appears to have borrowed so freely that it seems as though he must have carried a copy of *The Testaments* with him on his travels. Thus, the reader has before him in these pages what is at once striking for its blunt primitive style and valuable as some of the actual source books of *The Bible*.[17]

A perfect example of the way in which the apocryphal literature has made its indelible mark on the world of *The New Testament* can be seen in relation to *The First Book of Enoch.* Consider for a moment, if you will, the evidence of all four Gospels, in which Jesus refers to Himself as the Son of Man some eighty-one times. This is certainly a peculiar title when one considers the fact that most people assume Jesus was condemned for calling Himself the Son of God, not the Son of Man. The Jewish leaders repeatedly demanded to know if He claimed the title of the Son of God for Himself, but never once did any of the gospel writers record that Jesus did so. To a man, what they did reveal was, in response to this question, His reply was purely rhetorical. Said Jesus:

> "From now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God."
>
> And they all said, "Are you the Son of God, then?"
>
> And He replied, "You say that I am."
>
> Then they said, "What further need do we have of testimony? We heard it ourselves from his own mouth."[18]

---

17 *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, Volume 2*, R.H. Charles, p. 282

18 *Luke* 22:69-71

But notice that Jesus never claimed here to be the Son of God; yet His enemies insisted He did. Was this simply a case of their having heard what they expected to hear, even though He never said what they claimed? Unfortunately, such an oversimplification is itself a product of wishful thinking by anyone who insists that Jesus never quoted from the apocryphal books, because all one must consider is that even though He never verbalized that He was the Son of God, His critics acted as if He did. But how?

In fact, they "heard" Jesus "say" so by way of His more than eighty references to Himself as the Son of Man. To the average listener, the title Son of Man carries no divine significance whatsoever, but to the Jewish religious community of that day, the Son of Man was an even more potent title than that of the Son of God. And much to the chagrin of the apocryphal naysayers, this disjointed string of logic in the minds of Jesus' enemies proves it, because the title Son of Man finds its origins in none other than *First Enoch*, as is demonstrated by the following excerpt:

> There I saw the Ancient of Days, Whose head was like wool, and with Him stood another, Whose countenance resembled that of a Man. His face was full of grace, like that of the holy angels. Then I asked one of the angels who had been showing me all of these secret things…
>
> And he answered me, saying, "This is the Son of Man to Whom righteousness belongs … and Who will reveal all the treasures that are concealed, because the Lord of Spirits has chosen Him, and His portion surpasses everyone else in everlasting uprightness. This Son of Man Whom you see … will break the teeth of sinners. He'll hurl kings from their thrones and their dominions because they won't exalt or praise Him, nor humble themselves before Him, by Whom their kingdoms were granted to them."[19]

Hopefully, excerpts like this will put to rest any question as to whether or not Jesus quoted from the apocryphal literature. It should also help to explain the level of implacable hatred that the Jewish religious leaders displayed toward Jesus when this

19 *First Enoch* 46:1-4

apparently ordinary man insisted on equating Himself with the loftiest and mightiest figure in their Hebrew pantheon.[20]

A Thread of Prophecy

FINALLY, WE TURN TO the insistence that the apocryphal literature must be rejected because, unlike its legitimate counterpart of canonical Scripture, it contains no prophetic elements. This is perhaps the most spurious claim of all, because even a cursory examination of the many texts in this group will yield, on this point alone, a bounty far beyond the scope of this book.

In *The First Book of Enoch*, one finds innumerable descriptions of the future events concerning the long-awaited coming of the Son of Man and His subsequent judgment of mankind. Certainly, the most famous example of this is the quote by Jude in his *New Testament* letter: "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, 'See, the Lord is coming with ten thousand of His saints to judge everyone, and to convict them for their ungodliness and all the defiant words they've spoken against Him.'"[21]

Again, there is *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, which, while ostensibly a series of exhortations to Jacob's grandchildren, also provides a prophetic window into the future of Israel, one which speaks not only of the resurrection of Christ but also of the saints who were to rise in His wake. As Benjamin, the youngest son of Jacob, lay on his deathbed, he admonished his children with these words—both chilling and hopeful in their implications:

> The Lord will send His salvation in the form of an Only-Begotten Prophet. He'll enter into the Temple and there be treated with outrage. He'll be lifted up on a tree, the veil of the Temple will be torn, and the Spirit of God will pass on to the Gentiles as a flame pours forth, and He'll ascend from Hades and pass from Earth to Heaven…
>
> And then you'll see Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, rising on the right hand in gladness. Then we'll rise, too, each of us at the head of our tribe, wor-

20 See Act Three: The Players—*Enoch as: The Go-Between*
21 *Jude* 1:9

> shipping the King of Heaven, Who appeared on the Earth in the form of a Man with all humility.[22]

In *The Second Book of Esdras*, the visions of Ezra reveal the signs of the approaching messianic kingdom, the general resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, the New Jerusalem, and the coming of Messiah. In it, one finds the following prediction, written more than four centuries before the Advent of Christ:

> The time will come when the signs I've told you about will take place… Whoever is delivered from the evils I've predicted will see My wonders. For My Son, the Christ, will be revealed to those who are with Him, and those who are left will rejoice in Him, that is, in four hundred years, and it will be after those years that My Son Christ will die.[23]

Clearly, anyone who insists that the apocryphal books lack the prophetic elements that are in the canonical texts is blind by choice or by nature, but either way, they are blind to what even a rank amateur can detect, if only they are willing to honestly examine the evidence for themselves.

In our particular case, however, the extent to which we will be investigating this literature will be limited to a lone prophetic thread, though it is one that has everything to do with the all-important issue of the Advent of Christ. Unlike anything else in these ancient texts, this thread of prophecy is of paramount significance due to the fact that it weaves its way through no less than three of these books. Known as the prophecy of The Great Five and a Half Days, this messianic promise originates in *The First Book of Adam and Eve*, is then alluded to in *The Secrets of Enoch*, and finally culminates in *The Gospel of Nicodemus*. It is this prophecy, then, of The Great Five and a Half Days—which, as we will see, refers to a 5,500-year period from Adam to Christ—that will provide the framework we require to unravel the two mysteries this book has set out to solve. By verifying the historical reality of this *five and a half* "day" timeline, it is our intention to establish the criterion we are seeking in order to, one,

22 *The Testament of Benjamin* 2:6-9, 17-18
23 *Second Esdras* 7:26-29

demonstrate the Lord's control by way of His faithfulness to His promises, which is to say, "all the promises of God" that are "confirmed" in the Incarnation of Christ, and, two, demonstrate how this prophecy provides the key to revealing the hidden connection between the five *sacred* things.

Meanwhile, at this moment, I can imagine the reaction of everyone who has ever studied biblical chronology and who are all asking the same question: "But what about Archbishop Ussher's seventeenth-century timeline of *four* thousand years from Adam to Christ? I thought it was the accepted version derived from *The Bible*." And to such a question, my response is: For many years I thought the same thing, too. I did, that is, until I encountered an alternate timeline—and, mind you, a timeline that offers a vastly superior method for verifying God's faithfulness to His promises. As it turns out, my original view changed in light of the evidence found not only in the apocryphal record but in the historical record as well—evidence that is still, to this day, being overlooked by the general public.

Just consider this potent statement offered by Nathan Rouse, who wrote in his 1856 book entitled *A Dissertation on Sacred Chronology*: "The important fact is … that for 700 years after the commencement of the Christian Era … the average estimation of the period from Adam to Christ was some 5,500 years."[24] Imagine that: For the first seven hundred years of Christianity, no one ever once considered the possibility of a *four* thousand year period from Adam to Christ. Why? The reason for this was because, as historians like Rouse were right to point out, all the Church Fathers subscribed to a biblical chronology that was found in the earlier Greek Version of *The Old Testament* called *The Septuagint*—one that differed drastically from the later *Hebrew* Version, or *Masoretic* Text. Concerning this ecclesiastical controversy between the *Septuagint* and *Masoretic* Versions of *The Old Testament*, Rouse went on to say:

> Bishop Michael Russell in his observation on this subject, states that, "The *Septuagint* chronology was used before the Advent of Christ, was followed by the Church Fathers, and appears not to have been called into question until, in the eighth century, a disposition

24 *A Dissertation on Sacred Chronology*, Nathan Rouse, p. 20

to exchange it for the rabbinical method of reckoning was first manifested by the Venerable Bede.

"But his innovations were ill-received by his contemporaries. He was denounced as a heretic for taking it upon himself to assert … that the Redeemer of our race was not born in the sixth millennium of the world. Notwithstanding this attempt, however, and the high reputation which Bede possessed, his system was generally rejected and the *Septuagint* chronology prevailed. This will be evident from the following facts, for which we are chiefly indebted to Dr. William Hales.

"In the year 691 A.D., a general council was held at Constantinople, and in its recorded acts it is stated that the members of this council assembled in the Imperial City in the year of the world 6,199, which places the Creation 5,508 years before Christ. This council, it is true, was held in the nineteenth year of the life of Bede, and therefore prior to his attempt to introduce the Hebrew numbers. However, the date here assigned to the Creation was the act of a general council, and as such it furnishes the most decisive evidence that down to the close of the seventh century, the Christian Church continued to use the *Septuagint* chronology."[25]

Not only was this particular chronology in place until then, but if one takes the time to review the historical evidence, it will reveal that the lengthier time frame of 5,500 years from Adam to Christ was maintained by Orthodox Christianity for another eight centuries after that. It was actually not until the Reformation—and then only as an unforeseen consequence of one of the more ironic twists in history, to be discussed later in this work—that the *Septuagint* numbers were finally replaced by those in the *Masoretic* Text.[26] Concerning this fateful switch, Rouse wrote some three hundred years after the fact:

A sufficiency of evidence shows that, notwithstanding the attempt of Venerable Bede, the *Septuagint* chronology prevailed down to the time of the Reformation… In

25 *A Dissertation on Sacred Chronology*, Nathan Rouse, pp. 20-21

26 See Act Three: The Subplots—*A Capstone to Time: The Five and a Half Days*

> this grand chronological blunder, however, the reformers stood alone, and have continued to stand alone, to this day. It does not appear that any other church has followed them in this path. They have the merit and glory of it entirely to themselves. The Greek Church, as is well known, still adopts, as she has always done, the *Septuagint* chronology. The Roman Church, too, and … the Egyptian Copts, the Abyssinians, the Armenians, the Ethiopians and the Georgians. So that, although the followers of Luther … adopted the Hebrew numbers, all other churches have continued to reject them to this day.[27]

It is to such evidence that the present work will turn in an effort to shed new light on this critical lost chapter of biblical history. What is more, this book will present, as far as I know, the first attempt to connect the 5,500-year timeline of *The Septuagint Bible* with The Great Five and a Half Day prophecy so prevalent in apocryphal literature. And if this can be adequately accomplished, then it is my hope that they will never again stand apart; but in their being brought together in a sublime continuum, they will finally be seen in the context that the God of *The Bible* had originally intended for them.

Rest assured, however, this effort will not constitute some new revelation of my own conjuring. On the contrary, the storyline contained in this work will stand as the inevitable ancestor of previous generations who have paved the way with their courage and tenacity. Moreover, in turning to these gems of forgotten wisdom—like *The First Book of Adam and Eve*, *The Secrets of Enoch*, and *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, which provide us with the most comprehensive scriptural view of this prophecy of The Great Five and a Half Days—it will be just as it was intended by those intrepid scholars who gave mankind the first modern translations of these books. According to their mission statement:

> All of these apocryphal volumes are presented without argument or comment. The reader's own judgment and common sense are appealed to. It makes no difference

27 *A Dissertation on Sacred Chronology*, Nathan Rouse, p. 22

> whether he is Catholic or Protestant or Hebrew. The facts are plainly laid before him. These facts, for a long time, have been the peculiar esoteric property of the learned. They were available only in the original Greek and Latin and so forth. Now, they have been translated into plain English before the eye of every reader.
>
> The ordinary man has, therefore, the privilege of seeing upon what grounds the commonly accepted Scriptures rest. He can examine the pile of evidence, and do his own sifting…
>
> In other words, the ordinary man is invited to take his place in that council chamber which accepts or rejects the various writings of Scripture. It is safe to say the conclusions desired can be left to his common sense.[28]

To that end, this work is divided into three acts. Act One offers several chapters concerning the validity of those books that are intended to lay a firm foundation for demonstrating God's control and faithfulness—a foundation that just happens to involve examining books that have so often been presumptuously dismissed as "apocryphal" literature. Act Two will present a collection of *The Tales* themselves, in their entirety, with Enoch, the scribe, acting as both narrator and custodian of God's intention toward humanity. And Act Three will provide several follow-up chapters that will tie all the loose ends together in finally revealing the way in which the aforementioned five *sacred* things prove that God really is in the business of keeping His promises to mankind.

That said, I would like to present the reader with the following proviso. In trying to prove that these so-called "apocryphal volumes" are valid sources of divinely-inspired wisdom, and therefore worthy of their role in establishing the foundation I am seeking to build, my methods will not be—I repeat, *not be*—presented in the traditional manner found in most biblical treatises. Instead of offering a purely "scholastic" approach to authenticating the various manuscripts in question, the methodology presented in this work will be derived more in terms

28 *The Lost Books of the Bible and The Forgotten Books of Eden*, Frank Crane (Contributor), pp. 1-2

of the "story," as it were, that comes from directly investigating the narratives on their own terms. Whereas language loses something in the process of translation and mistranslation, and science reduces all reality down to what can only be measured and quantified, the approach in this work will be one that transcends the foibles of mere language and the limitations of brute science, which most analytics typically focus on. What does that mean? It means that the debate over the legitimacy of these ancient documents will not revolve around such things as linguistic comparisons and manuscript carbon dating. Instead, it will focus entirely on the story elements found in the narratives themselves, and the way in which these elements correlate with the more familiar ones found in the canonical books of Scripture—particularly as they pertain to the biblical doctrine of typology, which we will explain in the next section.

And to echo the words of those provided by another publisher—as it perfectly expresses my own wish in producing this volume of *Tales* retold—I offer this earnest sentiment in the hopes that:

> The publication of this book will do good because it takes away the veil of secrecy that has hidden, for many years, the act of the Church in accepting certain Scriptures and rejecting others. All of the grounds are rendered intelligible to the common man.[29]

A Word to the Wise

HIDDEN BOOKS, hidden in plain sight, God's hidden hand in history: To anyone reading this, it must certainly appear as if there is a very strong element of hide-and-seek to this story, and in describing it this way, I admit that one is not so far from the real truth after all. In my own defense, however, I would like to point out that I am not the first person to characterize the God of *The Bible* along these lines. Moreover, as a result of more than forty years of biblical research and exegetical training, I would like to think that I have even learned a thing or two from the Master of the game, that is, the One Whom the prophet Isaiah

29 *The Lost Books of the Bible and The Forgotten Books of Eden*, Frank Crane (Contributor), p. 3

described as the God Who hides Himself.[30]

Keeping this mind, then, I would next like to offer the following word to the wise, en route to diving into the rest of this work. This word just happens to involve some key points already touched upon and to which I will briefly turn in order to better equip anyone who is truly interested in discovering the way that the five *sacred* things demonstrate tangible proof of God's control and faithfulness. The key points are these, that of the divinely-inspired principle of concealing and revealing truth, and that of the humanly-inspired endeavor of discerning and mining truth that has its origins in the Divine. To those of you determined to make this journey of discovery with me, know this as you embark on the trip: I respectfully submit to you, here and now, that if you think that I will simply be blurting out the special connection conveyed in the five *sacred* things in Act One, you will be sorely disappointed. In fact, the true significance of what connects these five things will not be entirely apparent after reading Act Two, either. Furthermore, you will find yourself halfway through Act Three, and still you will probably be wondering what it is that connects them all.

Of course, considering such a dilemma as this, I suppose that the overwhelming temptation would be to bypass all the preliminary business just mentioned and skip ahead to the last half of Act Three, right? But unfortunately, I can assure you, this will not, and cannot, produce the desired results, if, in fact, you are one who earnestly wishes to know the startling proof of God's control and faithfulness of which I have spoken. If this really is what you desire, then you will resist such a foolhardy enterprise, and take to heart the folly of all those who dare to tread the path of the sacred without first attaining the prerequisites to prepare oneself for such a journey. Remember well: To those who rush ahead recklessly, only misfortune awaits, just as it did for those misguided ones who brazenly sought to behold the mysteries contained inside The Ark of the Covenant and lifted its lid with such devastating results.[31] Needless to say, in this case, I do not expect such spectacular results as all that, but what I am suggesting is that such a preemptive approach to penetrating the mystery of the five *sacred* things will only

30 *Isaiah* 45:15

31 *First Samuel* 6:19-20

short-circuit one's ability to grasp the true significance of the hidden link that can only be properly understood after taking the appropriate steps.

But why, you may ask, must this always be the case? If what you propose is true, then why not just tell us what connects the five things and proceed with your concluding arguments? What point could there be in dragging it out? And the answer to each of these questions is, I believe, the same answer that one might hear in response to the age-old question: Why is it not possible to open *The Bible*, point to a specific chapter and verse, and discover—just that simply—the meaning of life, or faith, or God's will? The truth is: Wisdom, as prescribed by the God of Scripture, is always such that it is intended to be dispensed incrementally, "bit by bit, action by action, and level by level." That is to say, what is required in the first year of one's journey of faith is no longer viable in the second; and what holds true in year two does not remain so in year three, and so on and so forth. A primary example of this can be seen in the history of God's people. When the Israelites originally faced the Red Sea, under Moses, the only thing that the people were required to do was look upon Moses and his raised staff, and God parted the waters, enabling them to pass through.[32] But forty years later, when they came to the Jordan River, under Joshua, God raised the stakes on them. This time, before the Lord would invoke His miraculous power to part the waters, He commanded that the priests who were responsible for transporting The Ark of the Covenant were to wade into the waters, at which point the river stopped flowing and piled up on itself, allowing the people to cross over into Palestine.[33]

Thus, like the peculiar phenomenon that someone experiences in seeing a mirage in the desert that ultimately evaporates from view upon arriving at its source, which then forces them to seek yet another one just over the next horizon, the journey that *The Bible* describes is not one that promises the attainment of its goal quickly, easily, or effortlessly. Instead, it is a journey that is, and always will be, one that is "*from* faith *to* faith."[34] As such, it requires a willingness and a determination to carry on

32 *Exodus* 14:21
33 *Joshua* 3:9-17
34 *Romans* 1:17

from quest to quest, from the discernment of hidden truth to the mining of that truth, seeking a God Who reveals Himself one day, while concealing Himself the next. In short, the answer to the mystery of the five *sacred* things is that, first and foremost, it is a mystery instituted by a God Who habitually hides His most precious truths, and Who only reveals them to whom He chooses, where He chooses, and when He chooses. And from an understanding of all this comes the realization that this mystery of the five things is, likewise, one that requires a process that is similar to anything indigenous to the endeavor of faith as it is revealed in Scripture.

In other words, the same incremental process that is required to penetrate the truth of *The Bible* itself will be the same one required to grasp a complete understanding of what connects the five *sacred* things. It will require an extended journey of discovery that necessarily leads a person from one foundational truth to the next, followed by the one after that, and the one after that, and all of it eventually building toward a crystallizing moment of insight that can only come from the hindsight that one gains after completing the whole journey. And to the ones who do make the whole journey, through to the end, I can at least promise you that the process will grant you the gift that once attained will forever endure in your hearts and minds, just as the treasure of God's word, once mined from the depths of obscurity, can never be diminished from any human soul.

THE ANALYSES

We speak a message of wisdom, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age who are coming to nothing. We speak of God's secret *wisdom, a wisdom that God has* hidden *and destined for our glory before time began.*

The Apostle Paul, *Letter to the Corinthians*

Arguments for Authenticity

The Seed of Truth

WHAT IS TRUTH? asked Pontius Pilate of his supplicant prisoner; and in doing so, he was essentially asking this question on behalf of all humanity. But according to the canonical record, Jesus offered no reply to Pilate. So why did He not answer him? If God is no respecter of persons, as the Scriptures assure us, then the One Who was to give His life as a ransom for mankind would certainly have answered such an important question. After all, Jesus stated that this was the very reason He came into the world: "To testify to the truth."[35] Yet based on the Apostle John's account, Jesus was inexplicably silent as to the exact nature of this truth.

Fortunately, for us, though, John was not the only person who recorded the events surrounding this pivotal moment in history. As it turns out, there is another take on this same conversation, which can be found in the apocryphal record known as *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, formerly called *The Acts of Pontius Pilate*. According to this version of the story, Jesus did answer the question.

> So Pilate asked, "What is truth?"
>
> And Jesus replied, "Truth is from Heaven."
>
> To which the somewhat disappointed Pilate followed up with another question. "Then truth is not of this Earth, is it?"
>
> But Jesus looked the governor squarely in the eye and replied, "Don't be too sure, my friend, because truth does exist on this Earth, but it does so among those who, having the power of judgment, are governed by the truth and who form proper judgment because of that truth."[36]

35 *John* 19:37
36 *Nicodemus* 3:11-13

Confronted by such an alternate version, one must then ask the obvious question. Which version of this story should be accepted as the truth? To which I would reply: Maybe they are both true. After all, as we already noted concerning the divergent accounts of Noah's animals and Judas' demise, history is not made up of only one version of the life of any historical character. So why should we expect there to be only one version of this event in the life of Jesus? It seems to me that one should look to their own conscience in such matters, because in the final analysis this is all any of us can do in our all-too-human pursuit of historical truth. In other words, one must honestly ask themselves: Do the words of Jesus in this particular story sound like those that would have been spoken by the One Who is the very embodiment of truth? Or do they contradict what one might expect Jesus to have said? The words ring true in both versions, do they not? If so, then why not simply accept the fact that what we are dealing with are two complimentary versions of the same event.

This, in turn, brings us face to face with the central issue encountered by anyone who reads a book like *Tales of Forever*, because it is a book that incorporates, at its core, stories that have all been stitched together from the so-called "apocryphal" record—in particular, *The First Book of Adam and Eve*, *The Secrets of Enoch*, *The Book of Jasher*, *The Letters of Herod and Pilate*, and *The Gospel of Nicodemus*. Naturally, in my own defense, only those stories that could be corroborated by the canonical record were drawn from, while any that contradicted it were summarily rejected, but far from expecting anyone to accept it all at face value, I am attempting, by way of these opening remarks, to provide a framework to make one's own judgment as to whether the apocryphal record can be trusted as a valid source of truth. Notwithstanding the centuries-old debate surrounding this literature, there are ways that one can approach the issue, and, as previously stated, the process I am offering will assuredly originate from the teachings and principles that are firmly grounded in the Biblical Canon.

What is truth, then? If one is a staunch believer in the traditional view of only the so-called "received texts," then I would quickly remind them that even Jesus taught that truth was not the same thing to each and every person. According to Him,

the whole world can be divided into four distinct groups. Each group, when confronted by "truth," will interpret this information based on their own personal frame of reference, and by virtue of these four different perspectives, what constitutes truth will inevitably end up producing four different results. Truth, then, no matter how obvious it seems can never be received in the same way by all people. Consequently, when Jesus spoke of the dispensing and receiving of truth, He compared it to a farmer who went about scattering seeds in a field, and as can be expected, He predicted four very different outcomes. Some seeds were gobbled up by the birds before they even got planted into the ground. Some seeds fell on rocky ground and sprouted, but, because they lacked depth of soil, withered in the heat of the Sun. Some seeds fell among thorns so that when the plants grew up they choked and died before too long. And finally, there were some seeds that fell among good soil; these proved to be the only ones that were able to produce a healthy crop.[37]

By the Middle Ages, this idea of the four-fold nature of assimilating the seed of truth became the impetus of a tradition of biblical interpretation that had its origins in the commentaries of the early Christian Era. Said Stephen A. Barney, professor emeritus of English at the University of California, Irvine, the four levels of interpretation involved: One, a "literal" interpretation of the events of the biblical story for historical purposes, with no underlying meaning. Two, a "typological" interpretation that connected the events of *The Old Testament* with *The New Testament*, particularly in the way that events of Christ's life related to the lives of earlier messianic figures who preceded Him. Three, a "moral" interpretation, which involved how one should act in the present, that is to say, a meaning derived from the "moral of the story." And four, an "analogical" interpretation, which had to do with an understanding of prophetic, or future, events of Christian history, that is to say, Heaven, Hell, and Judgment Day. In this way, the four types of interpretation correspond to all three modes of existence—past, present, and future; literal, with our past; typological, connecting the past

37 *Matthew* 13:3-9

with our present; moral, with our present; and analogical, with our future.[38]

To illustrate how this four-fold approach applies to Scripture, Dante, called "one of the greatest literary icons of the Western world,"[39] offered this example:

> To clarify this method of treatment, consider this verse: "When Israel went out of Egypt, the House of Jacob from a barbarous people, Judah was made His sanctuary, and Israel His dominion." (*Psalm* 113:1-2) Now, if we examine the letters alone (literally), the Exodus of the Children of Israel in the time of Moses is signified; in the allegory (typologically), our redemption accomplished through Christ; in the moral sense, the conversion of the soul from the struggle and misery of sin to the status of grace; in the analogical sense, the exodus of the human soul from the slavery of this corruption to the freedom of eternal glory.[40]

Furthermore, this same idea of the four-fold nature of truth was no stranger to either Jewish or Islamic theology. In Judaism it is known as *Pardes*, which refers to four different approaches to interpreting the biblical text. *Peshat* pertains to the "surface," or literal, meaning; *remez*, the "deep," or symbolic, meaning; *derash*, the "comparative," or similar, meaning; and *sod*, the "secret," or mystical, meaning.[41] And in Islam this idea was expressed by Jafar al-Sadiq, the Muslim scholar and Imam, who stated that *The Koran* has four similar levels of interpretation: "*The Book of God* has four things—literal expression (*ibara*), allusion (*ishara*), subtleties (*lataif*), and the deepest realities (*haqaiq*). The literal expression is for the common folk, the allusion is for the elite, the subtleties are for the friends of God, and the deepest realities are for the prophets."[42]

---

38 *Dictionary of the Middle Ages, Volume 1: Aachen to Augustinism—Allegory*, Stephen A. Barney (Contributor), p. 180

39 *Icons of the Middle Ages: Rulers, Writers, Rebels, and Saints: Volume 1*—Dante Alighieri, Elizabeth K. Haller (Contributor), p. 244

40 *The Epistle to Can Grande*, Dante Alighieri, pp. 5-6

41 *The Jewish Encyclopedia: Biblical Exegesis—Pardes*

42 *Spiritual Gems: The Mystical Koran Commentary*, Jafar al-Sadiq, p. 1

No wonder that when Jesus spoke about understanding the things of God, He referred to this four-fold principle of awareness. Therefore, it is with this four-fold aspect of knowledge in mind that I would now like to address why I have become convinced of the authenticity of the books that all but the ancient world—while in the case of *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, the pre-Reformation world—have deemed apocryphal. The reasons for this conviction stem from the following: First, in an etymological meaning revealed in the very word *apocryphal*; second, in the prophetic nature of the biblical record itself; third, in the internal logic of the books which comprise the apocryphal record; and fourth, in the striking relation with which those books correspond with the Canon of Scripture. For some, only one aspect of this explanation will prove sufficient in lending credence to this work, while others will require more convincing, more evidence, more time. Yet, alas, some will never open their minds to the truth presented here, no matter how hard one tries, and for that, the Lord of the Harvest reminds the best intentioned among us, they have no one to blame but themselves.

The End of Secrecy

TO BEGIN WITH—IN A truly ironic twist—there is the simple fact that this word *apocryphal* contains an obvious clue as to the mystery of why these books were deemed unacceptable and lost to humanity for so many centuries, because, over time, the word has come to signify something very different from its original etymological meaning. To the modern mind, something deemed apocryphal is anything that is considered "doubtful," "spurious," or "untrustworthy." In actuality, its true meaning, based on its root word, is something that is "secret" or "hidden," as in, anything considered apocryphal is merely a hidden thing to outsiders. In other words, the secret only remains a mystery to those who do not possess the tools of interpretation, but to those "on the inside," as it were, the otherwise hidden meaning of the thing is fully comprehensible.

When understood in this fashion, the nature of the message contained in books like *Adam and Eve*, *Enoch*, *Jasher*, and *Nicodemus* have been exactly that—a body of divinely-inspired wisdom literature, which has precisely fulfilled this desired inten-

tion. In this, it is just as the Scripture declares: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived, all the things that the Lord has prepared for those who love Him."[43] Continuing in this same vein, Paul then said, "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually discerned."[44]

Truth seen from this view, then, is never something that is as straightforward as one would hope for. From a biblical perspective, truth is always something that is veiled, hidden, obscure—the very essence of which is perfectly conveyed via the word *apocryphal*. Consider Matthew's words when he said, "Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables. He did not say anything to them without using one. In this way, what was spoken through the prophet was fulfilled: 'I'll open My mouth in parables; I'll utter *secret* things which have been *hidden* since the creation of the world.'"[45]

The word being used here for "secret" is the Greek word *krupto*, which means, "to conceal (that it may not become known)." Notice that this word *krupto*, from which we get our English word *cryptic*, is the central component for the word *apocryphal*. According to *Webster's Dictionary*, the word apocryphal comes to us from the Greek word *apokryphos*. What Webster does not mention, however, is that the prefix *apo* denotes the cessation, or reversal, of the word that it precedes; as in, if the root word means "secret" or "hidden," then when it is preceded by the prefix *apo*, the meaning of the word changes to that of "the end of secrecy" or "the reversal of being hidden." Clearly, this means that the real definition of the word *apocryphal* is the "unveiling" of a secret that was previously hidden from view.

Imagine that: The very people who were trying to discredit this so-called "forbidden wisdom" inadvertently chose a word that actually conveyed a latent truth about its destiny. No matter how many centuries of doubt and skepticism obscured its true meaning, the knowledge in these books would one day become "uncovered truth," and finally be seen for what it truly was—the wisdom of God that had been hidden away until it

43 *First Corinthians* 2:9
44 Ibid. 2:14
45 *Matthew* 13:34-35

was time to be revealed. In this, it is exactly as predicted in one of the most ancient texts known to mankind—*First Enoch*:

> The word of the blessing of Enoch, how he blessed the elect and the righteous who would exist in the time of trouble, rejecting all the wicked and ungodly. Enoch, a righteous man, who was with God, answered and spoke while his eyes were open and while he saw a holy vision in the Heavens. This the angels showed me. From them I heard all things and understood what I saw; that which will not take place in this generation but in a generation which is to succeed at a distant period, on account of the elect.[46]

Search for Hidden Treasure

APART FROM THE CLUES that the etymological root meaning of the word provide, the prophetic nature of Scripture also supports the idea of the existence of a body of wisdom which—even though it proceeded directly from God—would be lost for an intended duration. Then, at some preordained "set time," this hidden wisdom would, for the sake of a future generation, be hurled back into the light of day, as if from out of nowhere. This is precisely what Jesus was saying when He announced: "The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand!"[47] Though the world had experienced various degrees of awareness of God's existence until Jesus arrived on the stage of history, the world remained in a perpetual state of spiritual dysfunction. But upon being baptized by John—an event that was punctuated by a voice from Heaven—the earthly ministry of Jesus was inaugurated and with it a new era of enlightenment and awareness.

Again and again, the biblical authors spoke of God's deliberate pattern of hiding and revealing His most important truths. In every age—from the time of Adam, right up to the present hour—the world has ridden a veritable roller coaster of ignorance and awareness concerning the ebb and flow of God's manifestation. Yet even in those most harrowing of days, when God had withdrawn His presence because of mankind's utter

46 *First Enoch* 1:1-2
47 *Mark* 1:15

disregard for Him, there still remained a modicum of God-inspired revelation. In other words, there is, and always will be, more than one level of truth that the Lord is in the business of revealing. First, there is a general revelation of truth that all humanity is capable of perceiving as described by Paul. "Since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that mankind is without excuse."[48]

In addition to this universal awareness of the Divine, there is another aspect of understanding the reality of God, which is not something that can be grasped by the general population. The reason for this is clearly spelled out in *The Bible* so that there can be little doubt as to God's intention. Once again, Paul, as the great interpreter of Scripture, said it best: "We speak a message of wisdom, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age who are coming to nothing. We speak of God's *secret* wisdom, a wisdom that God has *hidden* and destined for our glory before time began."[49]

When one begins to see the revelation of God's word in these terms, which could be described as a cosmic bank vault with a time-specific point of unlocking, it is much easier to understand that the role the apocryphal literature has played throughout history is no aberration in the plan of God.

The knowledge of God, then, is not something that one is simply born with or inherits from one's parents. It must be sought after with tremendous effort and determination. Certainly, Solomon, renowned as the wisest man in history, must have had this in mind when he declared: "God in His greatness has concealed many things, while kings have the honor of discovering them."[50] The knowledge that *The Bible* speaks of is never merely surface-oriented; it must be dug for much in the same way that precious metals must be unearthed. "If you cry out for insight and understanding, and search for it like you'd search for *hidden* treasure, then you'll begin to understand and find the knowledge of God."[51]

48 *Romans* 1:20
49 *First Corinthians* 2:6-7
50 *Proverbs* 25:2
51 Ibid. 2:3-5

Ironically, however, not only must mankind search for wisdom, but the true Wisdom of God, Whom Solomon personified as a living force, also has the ability to search for us. "Wisdom calls out in the street. She shouts in the public squares; from the top of the walls and the gateways of the city, she cries out."[52] In this way, Solomon made it clear that the Wisdom of God is a thoughtful entity, capable of both pursuing and being pursued. As a result of this unique attribute of knowledge as an active, living force, God and mankind are in a veritable wrestling match when it comes to appropriating it. As so often happens, mankind foolishly spurns the advances of the very wisdom that reaches out to it:

> If you had responded to My rebuke, I would've poured out My heart and soul to you. But you rejected Me when I called, paid no attention when I reached out. You ignored all My advice and refused to listen to Me. So, I, in turn, will laugh when disaster overwhelms you. As you mocked Me, I will mock you when calamity overtakes you.[53]

In this, Isaiah further elaborated:

> I know how stubborn you are, with necks as unbending as iron. You're as hardheaded as bronze. That's why I told you ahead of time what I was going to do. That way you could never say, "My idols did it. My wooden image and metal god commanded it to happen!" You've heard My predictions and seen them fulfilled, but you refused to admit it. Now I'll tell you new things that I've never mentioned before, *secrets* that you've not yet heard.[54]

With all this in mind, it should come as no surprise that the average citizen of planet Earth thinks that God is either dead or not paying attention. Neither should one be surprised when the typical Christian doubts the possibility that the word of God could actually encompass more than the traditionally accepted

52 *Proverbs* 1:20-21
53 Ibid. 1:23-26
54 *Isaiah* 48:4-6

sixty-six books. As one can detect from a brief scan of Scripture, truth as God defines it is simply not something that is easily or casually appropriated. For the most part, truth is a *hidden* thing—a *secret* that resides deep in the heart of God, Who apparently shares it only with those of His choosing.

So the next time some super-spiritual know-it-all starts pontificating about how the apocryphal books were not included in the Canon of Scripture because God declared them unholy or uninspired, just remind them that the Lord is always confounding the self-proclaimed geniuses of this world. "I thank You, Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth," Jesus said, "for *hiding* the truth from those who think themselves so clever and wise, and for revealing it to the child-like."[55] And be bold in your conviction, as you fearlessly remind them of the words of our Lord: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered *hidden* in a field. In his excitement, he *hid* it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field—and to get the treasure, too!"[56]

Imagine that: How many people would even notice what is being said here? Admittedly, it is a subtle point, but for the purposes of our discussion it looms as an important subtlety, because contained in this parable is a clue for the existence of a body of *hidden* wisdom that someone discovered and then, after having gone to a great deal of trouble to find it, *hid* it again! If I am not mistaken this sounds exactly like the scenario surrounding the apocryphal literature with so much of its inherent mystery and intrigue. What else can this mean but that someone attained, by way of intense search, an understanding of God's long-lost kingdom and, having acquired this treasured awareness, then *hid* their discovery again in the hopes of recovering it at some future point in time? Like echoes reverberating down through the corridors of time, this same idea resounds throughout the ages; from the days of Enoch, the scribe, down to that of Asaph, the psalmist:

> Oh, my people, hear my teaching; listen to my words. I'll open my mouth in parables, I'll utter *hidden* things from days of old—what we've heard and known, what

55 *Matthew* 11:25; *Luke* 10:21
56 *Matthew* 13:44

> our Fathers have told us. We'll reveal them to our children; we'll tell the next generation about His power, about the wondrous things that He's performed on our behalf. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the Law in Israel, which He commanded our forefathers to teach their children so the next generation would know them, even the children who were yet to be born, and they, in turn, would tell their children. Then they'd put their trust in God and would not forget His deeds but would keep His commands.[57]

Then, from the mouth of Asaph, the words were reiterated by the Incarnate Word, Jesus, Who, contrary to popular belief, spoke in parables to veil the truth so they would remain ignorant of the *hidden* wisdom that the Lord chose to reveal to His elect ones. And just in case none of you believes that God is in the business of unveiling apocryphal wisdom, then simply revisit the words of Jesus as recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke:

> The disciples came to Him and asked, "Why do You speak to the people in parables?" And He replied, "The knowledge of the *secrets* of the Kingdom of Heaven has been given to you but not to them. Whoever has will be given more and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.
>
> "This is why I speak to them in parables: Though seeing, they do not perceive; though hearing, they do not understand. In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: You'll be forever hearing but never understanding. You'll be forever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused. They hardly hear with their ears, and have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see and hear, and understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them."[58]

An Improbable Connectivity

IN ADDITION TO considering etymological meanings and

57 *Psalm* 78:1-7

58 *Matthew* 13:10; *Mark* 4:10; *Luke* 8:9

prophetic aspects, one must also be struck by another clue as to the authenticity of the apocryphal texts—that is to say, what one could call the internal logic found in the books when examined in their totality. Mind you, what we are talking about here is nothing new when it comes to analyzing the degree of scriptural integrity. It is actually the same methodology used to demonstrate the veracity of the canonical books. One of the most pervasive misconceptions that mankind has ever entertained about *The Bible* is that because it was written by so many different authors there is no point in believing in its so-called "divine authorship." Skeptics and critics alike are unanimous in their appraisal that if the Scriptures are merely a compendium of scattered, indiscriminate writings there could be no way that it constitutes an infallible document "from God's mouth to our ears," as it were. It is therefore assumed to be a fraudulent book, which only an idiot or a fool would treat as an object of trust. On the face of it, this assumption might seem to hold true; yet, ironically, this thread of logic unravels in an instant when one considers the following alternative. Of course, *The Bible* is comprised of numerous perspectives, provided by way of many different authors, but this does not negate the possibility of its divine origins, in and of itself. In fact, this very diversity provides us with the clue that it could not possibly be the crude by-product of human imagination.

What makes *The Bible* such an amazing document actually arises from the fact that even though it is a book written across the entire span of human history it still bears the unmistakable stamp of a singular point of view. In other words, although so many hands have stirred the pot, although so many perspectives have added to its mix, the integrity of the scriptural record still bears a remarkable similarity through in and throughout. From age to age, what begins as a germ of thought in *The Old Testament* unfolds with astonishing continuity in *The New Testament*. From author to author, every book contained in *The Bible* echoes from cover to cover, clearly testifying that this cannot be the product of mere coincidence; it is undoubtedly the greatest proof as to its divine authorship.

Taking this into consideration, let us examine the internal logic of the apocryphal literature, that is to say, the way scattered references throughout these documents reveal a high

degree of confluence, or textual continuity, from book to book. The greatest example of this internal logic can be seen in what has come to be known as the prophecy of The Great Five and a Half Days—a prophecy introduced in *The First Book of Adam and Eve*, then alluded to in *The Secrets of Enoch* and finally brought full circle in *The Gospel of Nicodemus*.

Part one of three: When Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, God promised them that they would someday be allowed to return to the place they had forfeited through their disobedience. This return, however, would not take place, explained God—though in typically veiled terms—for another *five and a half* "days." Confused, Adam and Eve thought that God was telling them they would only have to wait *five and a half* days in human terms.[59] But much to their chagrin, they discovered that God was really saying they would have to wait *5,500 years* before they could expect to return to the garden, at which time: "One would come to save them and their descendants."[60] Now anyone familiar with *The Bible* is already well aware that, from God's perspective, time is very different from our own. Typically, it is accepted, as per our understanding of Scripture, that one of God's "days" is equal to a thousand years from our human frame of reference.[61] In this way, the apocryphal and canonical records are in agreement. Okay, so far, so good.

On to part two of three: With the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, events came to a head in the confrontation between Pontius Pilate and the Jewish religious authorities who instigated the crucifixion of Christ. In a final showdown, as depicted in the pages of *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, Pilate demanded that Annas and Caiaphas come clean concerning their crime against Jesus. Then it happened. Smitten by guilt, compounded by the astonishment over numerous reports of the resurrected Christ, Annas, the chief priest at Jerusalem, made a startling confession. In checking the record of their own Scripture—described by Annas as *The Seventy Books*—they encountered a prophecy concerning the coming of the Messiah, a prophecy stating that, counting from the time of Adam, "After 5,*500 years*,

59 *First Adam and Eve* 3:2-4
60 Ibid. 3:6
61 *Second Peter* 3:8; *Psalm* 90:4; *Jubilees* 4:30

Christ, the most beloved Son of God, was to come to Earth."[62] What is more, Annas even went so far as to make a fascinating connection between this prophecy and the dimensions of The Ark of the Covenant. As he described it:

> We further considered that perhaps He (speaking of this Messiah) was the very God of Israel Who spoke to Moses instructing him to build The Ark of the Covenant with dimensions of *five and a half* cubits. From this we surmised that the Christ would likewise come in an ark, or tabernacle, of a body after *5,500 years*.[63]

In this correspondence of the dimensions of The Ark of the Covenant, it appears that there is again an uncanny agreement between the apocryphal and canonical records.

Now for part three of three: Before Adam and Eve were told about the promise of "days" and before Annas and Caiaphas learned about it, an event seems to have triggered God's choice for this numerical figure of *five and a half* in connection with the coming of the Messiah, an event recorded by none other than Enoch. Ironically, it exists as a mere sidebar—a "footnote," if you will—in *The Secrets of Enoch*. In it, Enoch describes Adam's creation on the sixth day, his subsequent fall, and the Lord's response to that first act of disobedience. "Finally, the seventh day arrived and God said, 'Because of what they'd done, I only allowed Adam and Eve to remain in Paradise for *five and a half* hours before I forced them to leave.'"[64]

The significance of this numerical value will no doubt escape those who are unfamiliar with what *The Bible* has to say about divine judgment but will not go unnoticed by those who are. The reason is this: Already firmly established in Scripture is that when it comes to God's decrees involving His chosen ones there is always a direct correlation between the nature of their crime and the severity of their punishment. In other words, when the people willingly rebel against God's commands, the Lord makes an extremely conscious decision to punish them in direct proportion—no more and no less—to the exact extent of

62 *Nicodemus* 22:11
63 Ibid. 22:12-13
64 *Secrets of Enoch* 32:1-3

their disobedience. So, according to this divine law of crime and punishment, *The Book of Jubilees* states that when Cain died it was as a result of his house collapsing on top of him.

> And he was killed by its stones because he had killed his brother Abel with a stone, so in this way his death by stone was considered an act of righteous judgment. This is why it was ordained on the tablets of Heaven: With whatever instrument a man kills his neighbor, he will be killed with a similar object, and in whatever manner he wounds another, his punishment will be meted out in the same way.[65]

Louis Ginzberg, a Lithuanian professor of Judaism, provides us with some useful scenarios to illustrate this point in his book *The Legends of the Jews*. Of particular interest are the trials and tribulations of Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob. When his jealous brothers sold Joseph to Ishmaelites on their way to Egypt, they received twenty shekels of silver in exchange for him; therefore, according to this law of crime and punishment, God commanded that every firstborn son of Israel be redeemed with the same amount. Also, every Israelite must annually pay the sanctuary this amount that each of Joseph's brothers received as their share for his sale.[66] According to Zebulun, the sixth son of Jacob and Leah:

> When the brothers sold Joseph as a slave, eight of them, including Simeon and Gad, bought sandals with the money. Having acknowledged that it was blood money, they refused to buy food with it. But because Joseph had prophesied that he'd eventually be their king, they wanted to see what would become of his dreams. Therefore, it is written in the Law of Moses that whoever refuses to raise up a descendant on behalf of his brother, his sandals will be removed and they should spit upon him.
>
> So because the brothers of Joseph wanted him dead, the Lord made sure that they'd have to remove the san-

65 *Jubilees* 4:31-32

66 *The Legends of the Jews, Volume 2: From Joseph to the Exodus*, Louis Ginzberg, p. 18

> dals they wore in their conflict with Joseph. That's why, when they went to Egypt, the servants of Joseph forced them to remove their shoes and bow down to Joseph as the viceroy of Egypt. Not only that, but all the brothers were also spit upon, having been put to shame before the Egyptians, just as the Lord had decreed.[67]

Taking this into account, let us look at the most eloquent example of God's chastening of His people to be found in Scripture. I am referring to what is known as the Seventy Weeks of Daniel. Almost everyone who is familiar with biblical prophecy has heard of it. In this case, though, I want to focus on an aspect of the story that is often overlooked when discussing the implications of Daniel's prophecy, but first, let us set up our scene.

The prophet Daniel discovered while reading *The Book of Jeremiah* that God intended to extricate His people who had been in Babylonian captivity for seventy years.[68] He went on to say this seventy year bondage had been a microcosm of a greatly extended period of punishment—that is, seventy "weeks" of years—that the people of God were to endure, which would ultimately conclude with the advent of a glorious millennial age ushered in by none other than the Messiah Himself.[69] Until that day, however, God would be teaching His people to trust Him via incremental stages, which would gradually lead them from one phase of salvation history to the next.

Now, to the significance of all this for the purpose of our present study. Long before God decreed seventy years of Babylonian captivity, which prefigured the extended period of punishment, was the fact that when the people of Israel dwelled securely in Palestine there was an unusual law they were told to keep. Unfortunately, though, it was a law that was regularly neglected.

> For six years, you are to sow your fields, and harvest the crops, but during the seventh year let the land lie dormant, unplowed and unused. This way the poor and the stranger among your people may get food from

67 *The Testament of Zebulun*, 1:18-23
68 *Daniel* 9:2
69 Ibid. 9:24

> it, and the wild animals may eat what they leave behind. Do the same with your vineyards and your olive groves.[70]

The reason for this prohibition was that, as every seventh day was a Sabbath day, every seventh year was likewise a Sabbath year. In doing this, God intended to not only nurture the Israelites' attitude toward the poor, the stranger, and the animals but also to nurture their trust in His divine provision during every seventh year of their existence in that land. But sadly, history records that they did not abide by this prohibition, and because they continued to farm their fields during those Sabbath years, God punished them with the Babylonian captivity, thereby ensuring that the land would remain untouched.

> So the Israelites were carried into captivity and became servants to the king of Babylon, and during the entire time of its desolation, the land finally enjoyed its Sabbath rests, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the Lord as it was spoken by Jeremiah.[71]

So, returning to our story of the first couple's exile from Paradise: Just as the Israelites were expelled from Palestine in direct proportion to the amount of time that they were in it, Adam and Eve were exiled from the garden according to a similar scale of divine judgment. But could these parallels of time-specific lengths of judgment really be a simple case of coincidence? Or is it possible that the God of Set Times actually built into the scriptural record these kinds of clues to His control over human history? And if so, what can one surmise from it? If Enoch wrote his texts long before such patterns of God's judgment were established, then it was certainly no mere whim that compelled him to mention seemingly trivial information like Adam and Eve living in Eden for *five and a half* hours prior to their God-ordained exile of *five and a half* "days." Naturally, from a strictly humanistic point of view, it might seem like an impossible leap of logic to assume such a thing, but, if one pos-

70 *Exodus* 23:10
71 *Second Chronicles* 36:20-21

sesses a biblical view, it is not absurd at all.

One thing, however, is certain. We do have in our possession three separate manuscripts—*The First Book of Adam and Eve*, *The Secrets of Enoch*, and *The Gospel of Nicodemus*—all which were written long ago when the preservation of such ancient works demanded an improbable mixture of luck and determination. Yet they have somehow managed to survive to the present day. Even more astonishing to the modern mind, these manuscripts, which have all been scattered throughout time and geography, bear a similarly improbable connectivity, revealing a pattern that was generally believed to be confined to the Biblical Canon. Therefore, far from giving us the impression that they are the by-product of primitive human thought, they instead present a finely wrought synergy that no mere mortal, or group of mortals, could have ever conceived, separated by so many centuries, so many miles, so many improbabilities.

A Peculiar Puzzle

NEXT, WE WILL examine the external logic that is found in apocryphal literature; that is to say, we will consider the degree to which these texts coincide with the more familiar accounts in the canonical record. In actuality, the examples are so abundant that if every correspondence between the two were presented, this present study would likely double, if not triple, in size. Suffice it to say, then, we will be limiting our investigation of this particular point to a single—though pervasive—through-line story.

It has long been accepted that Moses, the famed lawgiver of Israel, was the original author of *The Pentateuch*, or the first five books of *The Old Testament*, which include *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, and *Deuteronomy*. Naturally, because it is common knowledge that Moses was around during the events of the last four books, most biblical historians have had little problem accepting that he could have written those books. But it has never been sufficiently answered as to how he could have written *Genesis*, considering it depicts events that he could not possibly have witnessed firsthand. The standard answer, of course, has always been some variation of: "Well, he was a prophet, wasn't he? Naturally, he must have been inspired by

God, right?" However, the more logical answer would lead us directly to the apocryphal record. Specifically, we are brought face to face with a book referred to by two well-known figures of *The Old Testament*; both Joshua and Samuel refer to it in their texts. The work I am referring to is *The Book of Jasher*. According to biblical scholar Cyrus H. Gordon, such ancient writings as *Jasher*—among them also, *The Book of the History of Man* (*Genesis* 5:1) and *The Book of the Wars of Yahweh* (*Numbers* 21:14)—undoubtedly provided literary fodder for *The Old Testament*, as he explained in no uncertain terms:[72]

> It is clear that some of the early sources were comprehensive writings excerpted more than once by the biblical author. For example, *The Book of Jasher* is excerpted twice: First, in *Joshua* 10:13; then, in *2 Samuel* 1:18. But the incorporation of such earlier sources does not mean that *The Pentateuch* or *Former Prophets* is the work of an editor who pasted together various documents. Once we view the work as a whole, we see that it is a fresh creation, though not a *creation ex nihilo*.[73]

It is this text of *Jasher*, then, that, upon careful review, will prove to be the actual source material that supplied Moses with the knowledge of the events of mankind's history prior to his own life. When Joshua was leading the army of Israel into battle against the Amorites, he prayed in the midst of the clash:

> 'Oh, Sun, stand still over Gibeon, oh, Moon, over the Valley of Aijalon.' So the Sun stood still and the Moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in *The Book of Jasher*. The Sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down a full day. There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the Lord listened to a man. Surely the Lord was fighting for Israel![74]

---

72 *The Common Background of Greek and Hebrew Civilizations*, Cyrus H. Gordon, p. 226

73 Ibid. pp. 283-84

74 *Joshua* 10:12-14

Samuel referred to it when David was told that King Saul and his son Jonathan had been killed. Even though Saul had jealously sought his life in revenge for his having been chosen to replace him as the new king of Israel, David still mourned Saul's death as one who had once been the anointed of God.

> And David took up this lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan, and ordered that the men of Judah be taught this lament of the bow, as it is written in *The Book of Jasher*: Oh, Israel, your glory lies slain on your heights. How the mighty have fallen![75]

The connections between *Jasher* and *The Old Testament*, however, do not end with these two events. A thorough examination will reveal endless parallels between them. The importance of this is that *Jasher* helps provide missing pieces to a puzzle that often leaves the reader to question whether texts like *Genesis* can tell us anything reliable about events that clearly took place in remotest antiquity. But seen together, the two records converge in an unexpected way, and occurrences that at first seemed too strange to believe are thrown into an entirely new light. Take, for example, an apparently disjointed array of facts as they are found in the traditional narrative of *Genesis*. First, upon eating from the Tree of Knowledge, the eyes of Adam and Eve were opened, triggering the rude awakening that they were naked, which then caused them to use fig leaves to cover their nudity.[76] God, however, had a different plan for them, and provided garments made from skins to cover their nakedness.[77] But as to the kind of skins they were and why fig leaves were insufficient, while these unspecified skins were adequate in God's view, the *Genesis* narrative does not reveal.

Later we are told that when God announced to Noah that He would be sending the Great Flood upon the Earth, the patriarch was somehow able to persuade thousands of animals into the haven of the Ark.[78] But as to how he did this is never explained or even suggested. We are simply expected to assume

75 *Second Samuel* 1:17-19
76 *Genesis* 3:6
77 Ibid. 3:21
78 Ibid. 7:8-9

that he waved some sort of magic wand, and every species of animal—both herbivore and carnivore—came waltzing in, happily cohabitating inside the Ark for forty tumultuous days and nights.

Then in one of the more puzzling scenarios described in *Genesis*, it is recorded that Noah, upon vacating the Ark, took to growing a vineyard, became drunk from the wine it produced, and passed out naked in his tent. Afterward, Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's nakedness and told his two brothers outside, but Shem and Japheth took a garment and, walking in backwards, covered their father's nakedness. Upon waking from his drunken stupor, Noah realized what his sons had done and, for reasons that are never made clear, pronounced a horrific curse on the descendants of his grandson, Canaan.[79] And because this dreadful curse was so incommensurate with the apparent actions of Ham, who merely looked upon his father's naked body and gossiped about it to his brothers, numerous biblical scholars have resorted to all manner of bizarre speculation as to the true nature of Ham's crime. Some have even gone so far as to conjecture—in their convoluted efforts to justify the punishment with the crime—that Ham must have resorted to some form of incestuous, homosexual activity. Unfortunately, however, the canonical record never provides a shred of evidence as to why a momentary peepshow and the subsequent gossip thereof would have warranted the invocation of such a sweeping curse as that of the enslavement of an entire people.

Next, there strode onto the biblical landscape the first great figure after the Flood, one Nimrod by name—a man who grew to have so much power over the animal kingdom that he became world renowned as "the mighty hunter before the Lord."[80] Soon, his ability to subdue the wild animals throughout the land caused such a sensation among the people that they eventually made him lord and master over all the sons of Noah. But as to how he developed such remarkable skill as a powerful hunter and charismatic king, once again, the *Genesis* record completely neglects to inform us.

Later still, we read the strange story of Abraham's twin grandsons, Jacob and Esau. Jacob it is said was a modest, qui-

79 *Genesis* 9:20-26
80 Ibid. 8:9-10

et fellow—a "homebody," if you will—while Esau, who took to the open fields, grew to become a skillful hunter.[81] What is more, because Esau preceded his brother Jacob at the time of their birth, he stood to gain all of the birthright privileges as the firstborn son of their father, Isaac. Not only that, but Isaac was also very fond of meat, which Esau, the hunter, was so adept at providing him. As a result, *The Bible* states, in no uncertain terms, that Isaac grew to love Esau more than the less flamboyant Jacob.

This leads us, then, to the final piece of our peculiar puzzle. From our earliest days as Christians, we have all been weaned on one of the more perplexing chapters in Scripture. In it, we are told the story of an exhausted and hungry Esau, who has returned home after a fruitless day of hunting. There, he encounters his brother Jacob, who offers him a mere bowl of lentil stew in exchange for his birthright blessing, which, quite inexplicably, Esau accepts to feed his empty belly.[82] But why would Esau have so foolishly sold away his birthright inheritance when he was such an obvious shoe-in to receive it from his father? What could have possibly led him to such a tragic blunder? He certainly was not stupid. Described as a cunning man, capable of tracking and hunting down an elusive prey, he does not exactly fit the picture of someone who would forfeit such an obvious opportunity for wealth and power. A man like that would never despise such an offer; not in the real world, at least. Yet the *Genesis* record never even attempts to address such a glaring conundrum. We are simply led to believe by every typical account that Esau was less spiritual than Jacob and, therefore, unworthy of all that the birthright offered. And they believe this, mind you, even though they know full well that Jacob—whose name means usurper—deliberately tricked his blind father, with the help of his duplicitous mother, into transferring this birthright from Esau to himself. How odd that most people never seem puzzled by such blatant incongruities. They simply accept whatever trite interpretation is offered them by way of the traditional view of the *Genesis* narrative.

Yet all of these scattered mysteries—the truth about Adam's adequate covering, Noah's power over the animals and

81 *Genesis* 25:27
82 Ibid. 25:29-34

his cursing of Canaan, Nimrod's domination as a hunter of both man and beast, and Esau's hunting prowess and lack thereof in procuring Abraham's birthright—can be explained when one simply takes the time to examine the apocryphal record. In this case, one need only turn to a passage in *The Book of Jasher* and another in *The First Book of Adam and Eve*. And make no mistake, these are mysteries that lie at the heart of a crossroad that leads to two entirely different modes of disbelief—one of doubt and the other, delusion. One road leads the skeptic to further dismiss *The Bible* into the realm of absurdity and foolishness, considering the endless list of *non sequiturs* offered in response; the other leads the believer to dull their own sensibilities when it comes to questioning the obvious, lest they even hint at a betrayal of their beloved, childhood interpretations.

So how can one hope to find an antidote in the face of such a cloud of confusion? First, we must ask ourselves: What are the incongruous pieces of this jumbled puzzle as we have presented them so far, and how can one possibly fit them all into a harmonious whole? Let us take a moment to count them down again, one by one. Adam and his wife receive mysterious animal skins that God gives them to wear instead of the fig leaves they had originally chosen. Then Noah, through some kind of unspecified animal magnetism, persuades all the animals to enter the Ark and for forty days manages to restrain the carnivores from devouring the herbivores. Then upon leaving the Ark, Noah gets drunk and naked, and pronounces a horrific curse on Ham's descendants because his son not only witnessed the debacle but also gossiped about it to his two brothers. Then Nimrod acquires such power over the wild animals that his fame causes the people to make him supreme leader over all the land. And finally, Esau, renowned hunter and favorite son of wealthy patriarch Isaac, inexplicably sells his family inheritance in exchange for a bowl of lentil stew. Got all that so far? Good. Then, as alluded to before, let us look to the passages in both *Jasher* and *First Adam and Eve* in order to untangle this odd mess of undifferentiated madness! Says *Jasher*, it all began in the days just after the Great Flood when:

> Cush, the son of Ham, the grandson of Noah, took a wife in his old age and she bore him a son, which they

named Nimrod, saying, "At that time mankind began again to rebel against God." And the child grew up, and because he was the son of his old age, his father loved him very much.

And the garment of skin which God made for Adam, when he went out of the garden, was given to Cush. Then after the death of Adam, his garment was given to Enoch, the son of Jared, and when Enoch was taken up to God, he gave it to Methuselah, his son.

After the death of Methuselah, Noah took it and brought it into the Ark, and it was with him until he left the Ark. Then, Ham stole the garment from Noah, his father, and he concealed it from his brothers. And when Ham had his firstborn, Cush, he secretly gave him the garment, and it was with Cush for a long time. Cush even went so far as to hide it from his sons and brothers; but when Nimrod was born, he decided to give him the garment because he loved him so much. So when Nimrod turned twenty, Cush gave him the garment of skins.

And Nimrod became strong when he put on the garment because God gave him his tremendous strength, and as a result he became a mighty hunter in the Earth. Throughout the land, Nimrod hunted the wild animals and soon he began to build altars where he offered up the animals as burnt offerings to the Lord.

Nimrod strengthened himself, and over time he rose up through the ranks of his brothers because he was so effective in fighting battles on behalf of his family, defeating all of their enemies in the process. It happened this way because it was the Lord Himself Who was delivering their enemies into the hand of Nimrod. And God prospered him in all his battles, and because of this he began to reign as a king upon the Earth.

Therefore, it became a common occurrence in those days that after a man who'd been trained for battle was ushered off to war, the people would say to him, "As God has done for Nimrod, the mighty hunter who suc-

ceeded in all his battles and rescued his family from their enemies, so may God do the same for you."[83]

So there we have it. The first missing piece to our puzzle, as revealed in *Jasher*, is the garment of animal skins that God had provided for Adam after his expulsion from the garden. But what could possibly be so special about a simple loincloth made from animal skins? Once again, the apocryphal literature provides us with an all-important clue.

In *First Adam and Eve*, we discover that God instructed the first couple where they could find something to cover their nakedness. The Lord told them: "There you will find skins of sheep that were left after lions ate the carcasses. Take them and make garments for yourselves, and clothe yourselves with them."[84] But Satan overheard God telling Adam about the sheepskins, and—consumed by his hatred of these humans—raced ahead of the couple, hoping to destroy the garments before they could use them as they had been instructed. Fortunately, as the story goes, the Word of God—or rather the pre-incarnate Jesus—bound the devil in chains before he could carry out his plan so that when Adam and Eve arrived they got their first real look at the hideous creature they had only previously encountered in the guise of the elegant serpent.[85]

Gazing upon the sheepskins that lay at his feet, Adam was the first person in history to experience an insight into the true meaning of what theologians would many centuries later come to label as "vicarious substitute," a term that referred to the death of Christ as an atonement for the sins of the people of God. According to *First Adam and Eve*:

Standing over the sheepskins, Adam stood and stared blankly down at them for several moments.

"What's wrong now, Adam?" asked Eve.

"I'm sad thinking about how we got these skins, that's all."

"Sad, why?"

"I'm sad because these skins have come from own-

83 *Jasher* 7:23-33
84 *First Adam and Eve* 50:7
85 Ibid. 51:2-5

ers who have died, and when we put them on, we'll be wearing emblems of their death."

"And someday," continued Eve, beginning to realize what he was saying, "we'll die just like they did, won't we?"[86]

The significance of these garments made of sheepskin lies in the fact that God was conveying a truth not only to them but to every one of the descendants of that first couple as well—to all of us, in fact. These sheepskins, which were the result of an attack by a lion, represented the first "type" in history that was to foreshadow the sacrificial death of the Lamb of God, Jesus, Who was slain before the foundation of the world.[87] And as God allowed evil men, compelled by the devil, to shed the blood of His Son,[88] it was a roaring lion, as a type of Satan, which killed the sheep that provided the first adequate covering of its kind for fallen humanity—sheepskins, which came as a result of the shed blood of their owners.

This same idea of Satan as a roaring lion is perfectly illustrated by E.W. Bullinger in his groundbreaking study entitled *The Witness of the Stars*, where he pointed to the significance of the constellation of Orion as typifying the conquering Hero of Heaven. As is well known to any biblical scholar, this constellation is mentioned three times in Scripture—twice by Job and once by Amos.[89] Both men, in no uncertain terms, proclaim that Orion was created by God, and, according to Bullinger, the purpose revealed in such a creative act was to corroborate the truth as it is portrayed in God's written word. In this case, Orion—the brightest constellation to be found in the night sky—is a mighty warrior who holds in his left hand the head of his vanquished prey, a lion's head.

Just who is this conquering hero, one might ask? The names of the stars that comprise this impressive constellation, said Bullinger, provide us with the necessary clues. In the raised foot of this figure is the star *Rigel*, which means "the foot that crushes." One of the stars in Orion's belt—the most famous among

86 *First Adam and Eve* 52:2
87 *Revelation* 5:6, 12; 13:8
88 *First Peter* 5:8
89 *Job* 9:9; 38:31; *Amos* 5:8

this trio of lights—is called *Al Nitak*, which means "the wounded One." Another star in his right leg is called *Saiph*, which means "bruised," the same Hebrew word found in the primordial prophecy of the Redeemer described in the first book of *The Bible*.[90] "And the Lord said to the serpent: 'Because you've done this thing, I'll create hostility between you and the woman, between your children and her children; he will crush your head, and you will *bruise* his heel.'"[91] Here we have a perfect illustration of none other than Jesus Christ, in a dual role as both the Suffering Servant and Conquering Hero. Having crushed His enemy, while in the act of being bruised Himself, He triumphantly holds aloft the head of his ancient foe, that is, Satan, who is forever seeking his next victim—in this case, the sheep killed by a lion that provided Adam's garment.

No wonder that Adam's sheepskin garment, as it was handed down from generation to generation, became such a remarkable source of divine power. It provided the initial step in the reconciliation between God and Adam after the tragic expulsion and alienation of that first couple. It enabled Noah to tame the animals so that they not only cooperated in their entering the Ark but also were temporarily freed from their adversarial nature while confined in it. Next, it was stolen from Noah by his son Ham, who undoubtedly took advantage of the fact that his father was passed out, dead drunk, in his tent. This, in turn, would explain why Noah pronounced such a harsh punishment on Ham; not because he merely peeped and tattled on him but because he stole such a prized artifact—one that Noah knew would never again be used for the God-ordained purpose for which it had been originally provided. And finally, once in Ham's possession, the garment was handed down to his grandson Nimrod, who found in it a virtually limitless source of power prior to his inward turn to self that ultimately weakened its efficacy, even though he wore it on his person until the day of his death.

All this brings us to the next series of questions that again only the apocryphal record is able to answer; and the questions are these: What happened to Adam's garment after Nimrod had it? Did he pass it on to one of his sons like his father be-

90 *The Witness of the Stars*, E.W. Bullinger, pp. 124-27
91 *Genesis* 3:14-15

fore him? How was it that Esau, apparently following in the tradition of Nimrod, became such a powerful hunter? And finally: Why did Esau so carelessly forfeit the birthright blessing of Abraham when it would have bestowed untold wealth and power on him? One need only continue reading further in *Jasher* to find the answers. With these answers, one comes face to face with some very important clues en route to our attempt to solving the ancient mysteries that we are presently investigating. According to *Jasher*:

> At that time, Esau, after the death of Abraham, often went out hunting in the fields. Around the same time, Nimrod, king of Babel, who was also known as Amraphel,[92] was in the habit of hunting during the coolest part of the day, accompanied by his most powerful warriors. As he did, Nimrod would see that Esau was also hunting in the same fields, and, over the course of time, the king of Babel grew jealous of the grandson of Abraham.
>
> One day while Esau was hunting, he spotted Nimrod wandering through the wilderness with two of his bodyguards. At the time, Esau could see that the rest of Nimrod's warriors were yet a great distance from the king, all heading in different directions, each in search of their own prey. So concealing himself there in the bushes, Esau began to stalk Nimrod as though he were hunting a wild animal, and because Nimrod and his men had no idea they were being stalked, they eventually wandered right into the place where Esau was hiding.
>
> Without warning, Esau lunged from behind the bush, sword drawn, and ran toward Nimrod intent on engaging him in hand-to-hand combat. Furiously, Esau slashed at Nimrod and his two bodyguards, and in mere moments he beheaded the king of Babel and hacked the bodyguards to death. And when the rest of Nimrod's warriors heard their cries from a distance, they came running to find out what had happened.
>
> From a distance, Esau could see Nimrod's men

92 compare with *Genesis* 14:1, 9

running toward him, so he grabbed the valuable garment of Nimrod, which had enabled him to subdue an entire kingdom and, as quickly as he could, ran home with the garment securely in his grasp.

Arriving home, exhausted and still shaken from the thrill of battle, he found his brother Jacob cooking a delicious meal and hungrily sat down next to him.[93]

It is at this crucial stage that the canonical record states that the famished Esau sold his birthright at the cunning behest of his brother. What tradition does not point out, though, is why he made such a reckless, foolhardy decision. We are simply expected to accept the age-old tripe that because Esau was such a profane person he simply had no respect for such spiritual matters. However, considering the additional testimony of the apocryphal record, this view is forever altered. Far from seeing Esau as one who was incapable of appreciating the value of the family blessing, the picture that *Jasher* presents to us is definitely one of a very ambitious man.

In fact, Esau is portrayed as someone who was so rabidly ambitious that he was willing to take on the might of the most powerful man of the age. Once he had managed to kill Nimrod and rob him of the talisman that had enabled him to subjugate the entire world, he simply had no further need of the birthright of men like Abraham and Isaac. Certainly, these were not men who Esau aspired to emulate. These men were not known as world conquerors but as lovers of the kind of world that a benevolent God was attempting to establish, a God Who, above all, called men to offer their goods and services as a means of blessing humanity. In other words, however much the patriarchal blessing offered a man like Esau in terms of wealth and power it was still one that was implicitly meant to be shared and thus, in his view, squandered upon a pathetic, needy world. In contrast, the promise that Adam's garment held out to Esau was one of unmitigated fame and fortune. No wonder that Esau was suddenly so willing to trade away something that had previously been seen as a thing of value but in light of his newfound situation was only useful for filling his empty belly. In this, the canonical record is quite correct in describing Esau as a profane

93 *Jasher* 27:1-11

and foolish man with no depth of spiritual understanding. It simply misses the mark when it comes to revealing the specific underlying motive for such a rash decision on Esau's part.

Still, I can hear the grumblings of the casual reader of this who might be asking, "But if you say that Moses used *Jasher* as his source material for writing *Genesis*, then he must have had a good reason for leaving that part out, right?" To which I would reply: "But I have already offered a plausible explanation as to why he might have left it out." Based on the divine intention of teaching in parables, God causes some of His deepest truths to be hidden away until some future date when mankind is finally ready to hear them again, like the man in the parable of buried treasure who, after having discovered the truth, then decides to rebury it.[94]

Was it an unconscious decision, then, on the part of Moses to delete this all-important connection? Or was it an inspired decision willed upon him by the Holy Spirit? No one, I believe, will ever know for sure. Suffice it to say, that considering God's cosmic game of hide-and-seek it is a truth that deserves the attention of anyone fortunate enough to be confronted by it once it has resurfaced. The real tragedy is when people receive such enlightening forms of truth but fail to appreciate them, just as when old wineskins are filled with new wine but are incapable of containing it. Sadly, like those proverbial old wineskins, instead of embracing the newness of fresh truth from God's word, their minds figuratively burst because of their rigidity of thought.[95]

Still, I can hear others say, "Maybe Moses didn't record the part about Adam's garment because God wanted to suppress the knowledge of such things so people would no longer expect divine power in mere objects but in Him alone. After all, since Jesus came along, stuff like that just doesn't happen anymore, right?" To which I would reply in typical style: "You think?"

Famous throughout the history of Christendom are numerous legends that would suggest otherwise. One example of this is found in a collection of letters exchanged between Herod Antipas and Pontius Pilate, in a document entitled *The Death of Pilate, who Condemned Jesus*. In it, there is an interesting sto-

94 *Matthew* 13:44

95 *Matthew* 9:17; *Mark* 2:22; *Luke* 5:37

ry that refers to a famous object that has over time permutated into a variety of forms, all of them, however, involving a single element—that of an image of Christ. As the story goes: A woman named Veronica—or Berenice, depending on your language frame—encountered Jesus during His travels throughout Judea. Then at some point during their conversation, Veronica acquired a picture of the face of Christ on canvas, or as depicted in other versions, either a handkerchief or a cloth.[96]

Later in this same account, Veronica was met by an emissary of Tiberius Caesar sent to Jerusalem seeking the assistance of a man who had allegedly been healing the sick by merely speaking to them, namely Jesus. The reason this emissary had been sent there was because Caesar had fallen gravely ill, and because the emperor was unable to find a cure from his Roman physicians, he had been driven by desperation to seek help through any means possible. When Veronica told the emissary that she possessed a painting of Jesus, he suggested that they travel to Rome, whereupon presenting the image to Caesar he was miraculously healed from his disease. Pretty far-fetched, right? I mean, really, how can anybody believe something as ridiculous as that? This story is nowhere in the Biblical Canon, so naturally it must be treated with grave suspicion.

But wait. What if there were similar examples to be found in the received text of the Church? Would that suffice to deter one's skepticism? Then consider this: Such an incident can be found; and not just one but at least two. One of them has to do with ordinary articles of clothing that merely came into contact with the skin of the Apostle Paul, and from that point onward they supposedly took on healing properties. "Now God worked unusual miracles by the hand of Paul so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them."[97]

So, as in the case of Adam's sheepskin garment—which clearly conveyed spiritual power over the forces of nature—Veronica's painting and Paul's handkerchief were said to have contained similar properties.

Then, there is an even more important example of this in *The Bible*, one that involves none other than Jesus Himself. Cer-

96 e.g., The Shroud of Turin

97 *Acts* 19:11-12

tainly, you are aware of the story of Jesus' seamless robe, are you not? No? Well, let me tell you about it then. See how it compares with the stories of Adam's garment, Veronica's painting, and Paul's handkerchief, and when you have heard it, you decide if such things are still sanctioned by the God of canonical Scripture. Said John:

> When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it."
>
> It happened this way so that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which said, "They divided my garments among them, and cast lots for my clothing." So this is what the soldiers did.[98]

Now, in telling the story of Jesus' seamless robe, I would like to add a sidebar. Just in case the reader thinks that we are dabbling in nonessential matters here, let me assure them of one simple fact. Although the discussion of such things as garments, paintings, handkerchiefs, and robes may not seem like legitimate subjects for the serious *Bible* student, they are subjects of great importance to the writers of Holy Writ, no matter how much the darkened mind of humanity tries to trivialize them. Case in point is a passage in *The Gospel of John* regarding the crucifixion of Jesus. In fact, it contains a reference to one of the most profoundly mournful psalms ever penned by King David, called a man after God's own heart. Later, it intrudes into John's Gospel as a brief insertion, but its implications far outweigh its brevity, as anyone who loves the Scriptures will attest. It does this by virtue of the uncanny way in which words that were spoken in *The Old Testament* are spoken again by One Who inhabits the world of *The New Testament*. As it turns out, by speaking these words afresh, the old words are imbued with new meaning, creating startling, unexpected connections between past and present. The twenty-second psalm of David's, then, which has Jesus breathing new life into his words, is so

98 *John* 19:23-24

marvelous that the discerning reader will be astonished by its sheer poignancy. And I mention it here to lend credence to the overall importance to the words being quoted, because, in point of fact, so much of this remarkable psalm could have been spoken by Jesus, yet all but two verses are lifted out of it.

As Jesus hung on the cross, poised between Heaven and Hell, the haunting words of David flowed through Him like a rippling wave in time. Before Jesus quoted the words, no one in history could have ever anticipated them being spoken that way, because no one at the time understood the extent to which the lowly Nazarene really was the word of God made flesh. Only then would it be revealed how inseparable were the past and the present, as the words of messianic figures like Enoch, Moses, and David found their ultimate expression in the mouth of Jesus, and never more poignantly than in the final moments before His death on the cross. A thousand years before Jesus would echo his words, King David lamented:

> My God, my God. Why have You forsaken me? Why do You remain so distant? Why do You ignore my cries for help? My enemies surround me like a herd of bulls; fierce bulls of Bashan have hemmed me in. Like roaring lions attacking their prey, they come at me with open mouths. My life is poured out like water; all my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax, melting within me. My strength has dried up like baked clay. My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. You have laid me in the dust and left me for dead. My enemies surround me like a pack of dogs; an evil gang closes in on me. They've pierced my hands and feet. I can count every bone in my body. My enemies stare at me and gloat. They divide my clothes amongst themselves and throw dice for my garments.[99]

Only later, in the tumultuous events of the crucifixion, would the poetry of the psalmist take on the flesh and blood of actual history. As David mourned his plight as the hunted king of Israel prior to his eventual rise to the throne, Jesus would fulfill His own destiny in a similar manner, though in His case

99 *Psalm* 22:1; 12-18

through death and resurrection. But en route to His ultimate exaltation, Jesus famously sighed, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"[100] And during His humiliation on the cross, the Roman soldiers gambled to see who would win His seamless robe.

But whatever became of this seamless robe of Jesus? Was it lost to history after those fateful days following the crucifixion? If the canonical record were our only source for such inquiries, then, yes, it would appear that it did. But how could something so important in the minds of the biblical authors simply vanish without a trace? Fortunately, for the sake of those who love the truth when they hear it, there is another source to be had concerning the history of Jesus' robe. In *The Death of Pilate*, the story is told how, in the days following Caesar's healing by way of the painting of Christ, Pontius Pilate was brought to Rome to be interrogated about his role in the crucifixion of Jesus. Continuing in the apocryphal record, we read:

> So Pilate was apprehended by order of Tiberius Caesar, and brought to Rome. When Caesar heard he had arrived in the city, he was so overwhelmed by an unquenchable fury that he demanded that the governor be brought before him right away.
>
> Now Pilate brought the seamless robe of Jesus with him, and he wore it when he appeared before the emperor. And as soon as Tiberius saw Pilate, all his anger subsided, and he rose to warmly greet him. He was unable to speak harshly to him about anything. Before Pilate's arrival, Caesar had been furious, but in his presence, he acted gently.
>
> Dismissing Pilate from the room, Caesar became enraged again, chastising himself for not expressing his anger. So he ordered to have him brought back in, swearing that Pilate was nothing but a child of death, unfit to live, but when he saw him again, he instantly greeted him with kindness, laying aside all his fury. Everyone there was quite astonished, as was Tiberius.
>
> Eventually though—either by divine suggestion or persuasion by some Christian—Caesar had Pilate

100 *Matthew* 27:46; *John* 19:24

> stripped of his robe and quickly the original fury of his mind returned. As the emperor pondered what was happening, someone explained to him that Pilate had been wearing the seamless robe of the Lord Jesus.[101]

What can one surmise from all of the aforementioned examples? First, we have Adam's garment, which not only procured divine favor for him and his wife but subsequently bestowed awesome powers upon Noah, Nimrod, and Esau after them. Then there is Veronica's painting of Jesus that brought healing power even to Tiberius Caesar, followed by Paul's handkerchief that brought healing to those who came into contact with it. And finally, there is Jesus' seamless robe and with it the uncanny power that was imparted to Pilate, who wore it with such dramatic results in the presence of the Roman emperor. Seen separately, as they have been for so many centuries, these various accounts lay about—like scattered jewels—without a proper context, without rhyme or reason, but seen together, in relation to the canonical texts, they coalesce to solidify and substantiate one's overall faith in *The Bible* as a whole. Seen as points on a continuum, the garment, the painting, the handkerchief, and the robe present a string of unlikely but powerful connections, which, to the discerning, clearly reveal God's hidden hand in history.

Of course, anyone familiar with *The Bible* knows full well that, from cover to cover, it is, and always has been, a book of miracles. The ultimate question we are trying to ascertain here, however, is not whether or not miracles are possible. Even much of today's scientific way of thinking lends credence to the possibility of the miraculous, the fantastic, the magical, led by such luminaries as English physicist and science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke, who famously stated, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."[102] According to this worldview, the only thing that distinguishes the natural from the supernatural is one of perspective, not in anything that is inherent to nature itself. Therefore, it is best to keep in mind that anyone who urges the spiritually-oriented person to abandon their faith in biblical utterances on the grounds that

101 *The Death of Pilate, who Condemned Jesus*
102 *Profiles of the Future*, Arthur C. Clarke

no one was there to prove any of it really happened would do just as well to urge the scientifically-oriented person to abandon their faith in Big Bang utterances on the same grounds. On the other hand, it is important to realize that someone does not need to shake hands with Abraham Lincoln or George Washington any more than they would Jesus of Nazareth or John the Baptist to prove that they existed. Historical certainty—which is what we are after here—is not comprised so much of scientific empiricism as it is of consistent patterns of eyewitness testimony, much in the same way that the legal proceedings of any court of law rest upon the overwhelming evidence of eyewitness testimony as much as it does on the evidence of DNA testing.

So what does any of this have to do with the preceding assortment of talismans of power? The importance of it lies in the all-important question: What do all these objects have in common? The most obvious answer appears to be "*power*." But this association, in and of itself, seems to reveal nothing to genuine students of *The Bible*. No, what we are looking for here is more at: What is the nature of this power that all these items seem to possess? Or more specifically: What is the common principle that connects the power that emanates from these objects? Let us take a look, one by one.

First, we have Adam's garment, which as we have seen came from sheep that were killed by a lion. From this fact one can surmise that God intended to convey a message to Adam and his descendants, that is to say, only through the shed blood of another is there adequate appeasement of sin—the root cause of spiritual alienation—in the divine view. The garment, then, clearly typifies the sacrifice of Jesus as the Lamb of God. The same can also be said of the painting of Christ that Veronica presented to Caesar. This event took place after the crucifixion, and as such the healing powers it bestowed upon the Roman emperor can be seen as a function of the efficacy of the shed blood of the Savior. Likewise, Paul was a minister of the risen Jesus, Whom He chose as "one born out of due time," endowing him with an extraordinary gift of healing as witnessed by the unique virtues of a handkerchief that had simply come into contact with his skin.

And finally, we see the same thing happening in regard to the seamless robe of Jesus, which was worn by Pilate with

such powerful results in the presence of Caesar. Just like Adam, Noah, and Nimrod before him, Pilate possessed a talisman that provided its wearer with a power that nullified the potency of his adversary, in the same way that the wrath of God is quenched by the sacrifice of His Son. For one brief moment, Pilate stood before the furious emperor of Rome as a type of all mankind who stand guilty before the righteously indignant Emperor of the Universe, but because he had been wearing Jesus' seamless robe he was "covered by the skins," as it were, of the Lamb of God. As such, the wrath of the emperor was momentarily appeased. As long as Pilate wore it, Caesar was gripped not by unquenchable fury but by boundless compassion for this pitiful man who had been manipulated by forces—both human and divine—beyond his wildest imagination. But as soon as he was stripped of the robe, the emperor's anger was unleashed once again.

So the underlying principle that binds all these talismans of power together is the sacrifice of Christ, the Lamb of God Who gave His life as a propitiation for sin and thus as a vicarious substitute for the sake of mankind. In this way, the very thing that Jesus predicted is revealed in all its splendor. Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." So He said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three full days, so the Son of Man will be in the heart of the Earth."[103]

Upon first reading this passage, one might surmise that Jesus is saying that no matter how much you ask for a sign from Heaven, you are never going to get one. But far from refusing their request, what He was saying was that whenever God reveals Himself, as He so often does, the sign that He is performing has the sole purpose of typifying the death and resurrection of Jesus, of which Jonah in the belly of the whale is the primary example. According to this view, each and every one of the talismans of power we have examined so far conform to this paramount function, just as Cinderella's foot perfectly fits into the proverbial glass slipper.

103 *Matthew* 12:39-40; *Luke* 11:29-30

Hidden in Plain Sight

THIS IS WHY, FROM beginning to end—in establishing a foundation to demonstrate God's control and faithfulness via the five *sacred* things—the present exercise has been one in which we have sought to establish an argument for the authenticity of the apocryphal record on the basis of a holistic approach. In this case, we have sought to examine the question via a four-fold approach—in the etymological meaning of the word itself, in the prophetic nature of Scripture, in the internal logic that exists within the corpus of apocryphal texts themselves, and in the external logic that exists between the apocryphal and canonical records.

In a nutshell, we found that the very word *apocryphal* contains a meaningful clue as to its function and purpose in God's unfolding plan of the ages. Accordingly, true wisdom is always something that the Lord deliberately hides in the secret place of His heart, and which is brought forth only for the sake of truth seekers worthy of the task. This truth, though, is one that was predestined to have been lost amidst the sands of time until a future generation would both rediscover it and bear witness to its reemergence. And not only would this truth one day resurface, but it would do so in such a way that it would remain on the threshold of human awareness.

In this context, truth exists in the world as a bittersweet paradox. Perceived by some, as though they had a key to unlocking the divine vault, it would, however, *not* be understood by others who upon hearing the same "truth" would remain ignorant of its genuine significance. In this, Paul, as usual, expressed it best:

> Of which I became a minister according to the stewardship that God gave me for your benefit in order to fulfill the word of God, which is the *mystery* that has been *hidden* from past ages and generations but is now *revealed* to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this *mystery* among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.[104]

104 *Colossians* 1:25-27

Then, while examining the internal harmony that exists within the numerous apocryphal texts themselves, we discovered an amazing synergy in God's decrees of judgment upon His chosen ones. In the case of the Children of Israel, who dwelled safely in Palestine, and Adam and Eve, who lived happily in the Garden of Eden, the length of the divine judgment that God decreed on them was found to be directly correlated to their time spent in obedience to His commands. Seen together, these two timelines display a remarkable confluence that the human imagination could have never devised, especially when considering that all the pieces of this extended puzzle exist in ancient documents scattered throughout the globe.

In the case of Israel and their descendants, we found that, after having defiled seventy years of Sabbath rest while in the Promised Land, they were to be banned from the territory for seventy weeks of "years," until the time when a glorious millennial age was to be ushered in by none other than the Messiah Himself.[105] As a result of this awareness, it became apparent that a similar scale of judgment had been meted out to Adam and his descendants. In their case, after having been in the garden for *five and a half* hours, they were to remain outside of God's direct presence for *five and a half* "days," or 5,500 years,[106] at which time, "One would come to save him and his faithful children."[107]

And for the final aspect of our inquiry, as it pertains to an external logic that exists between the apocryphal and canonical records, we discovered an uncanny relationship between them that helped to shed new light on many of the more perplexing passages in the received texts. In this way, the strange experiences of Adam, Noah, Ham, Nimrod, and Esau came together in a way that the Biblical Canon, with its threadbare narrative, has never been able to achieve. In the process of our study, we saw how the scattered accounts of Adam's garment, Veronica's painting, Paul's handkerchief, and Jesus' seamless robe, all were brought into sharp focus, forming a unique convergence that ultimately confirmed the words of Christ Himself Who revealed the truth about divine power. To all those who seek a

105 *Exodus* 23:10; *Second Chronicles* 36:20-21; *Daniel* 9:24

106 See Act Three: The Themes—*A Prophecy of Days*

107 *First Adam and Eve* 3:6; *Secrets of Enoch* 32:1-3; *Nicodemus* 22:12-13

heavenly sign, Jesus said, "The only sign that God is willing to perform is the sign of Jonah, who like the Son of Man would also be in the heart of the Earth for three full days."[108]

In all of this, we have pursued our four-fold approach, utilizing interconnected lines of inquiry. Hopefully, in doing so, it has become clear that these apocryphal accounts, contrary to popular opinion, exist in perfect harmony with the canonical record, and as such are able to illuminate what the traditional texts have only dealt with in a superficial manner. If this has become sufficiently obvious, then it is self-evident that both the canonical and non-canonical records should stand together as a unified body of divinely-inspired wisdom. And set free from its struggle, mankind might finally see this once upon a time forbidden wisdom not as some offshoot of heretical literature but as the ultimate key to unleashing latent truths, which are even now lying about like so many scattered jewels, hidden in plain sight.

108 *Matthew* 12:39-40; *Luke* 11:29-30

Shadow and Substance

Things to Come

AS HAS BEEN SHOWN in our previous discussion, one of the greatest proofs of the authenticity of the apocryphal literature is its ability to reveal a coherence within the very fabric of its textual presentation. There is an internal logic in the information found throughout the corpus of books deemed non-canonical; and there is an external logic in the consistency between the apocryphal and canonical texts. In other words, just as the accepted texts of Scripture convey a harmonious relationship, both internally and externally, the stories found in the apocryphal record bear a strikingly similar set of relationships.

An internal harmony is revealed in the case of the prophecy of the Great Five and a Half Days, begun in *The First Book of Adam and Eve*, alluded to in *The Secrets of Enoch*, and fulfilled in *The Gospel of Nicodemus*. As detached prophetic wisps, they float about as disjointed blips on the divine radar screen, but stitched together they coalesce into a genuine pattern, obvious to even the most obtuse observer of biblical timelines.

Similarly, an external harmony can be seen in the case of the divine attributes displayed by various individuals mentioned throughout the received texts—some of them heroic figures, like Enoch and Noah, and some villainous, like Nimrod and Esau. Until now, all these lives had been traditionally viewed as discordant pieces of a scattered tapestry. Upon further review, though, we found there really is a common thread that makes sense of their apparently disarrayed experiences. This thread, which can only be found in the apocryphal record, involves the strange story of the most ancient talisman known to mankind, that is, the garments of sheepskin that God made for Adam and Eve after they were expelled from the Garden of Eden.

Having established this kind of logical structure, which binds the apocryphal and canonical record into a cohesive whole, I would now like to proceed further in light of this newfound awareness. Next, we will examine the extent to which

the apocryphal record lends itself to deepening our understanding of the biblical doctrine known as typology. In theological terms, typology is the doctrine that expounds the idea that certain events, persons, or statements in *The Old Testament* are "types" that represent "shadows" that prefigure specific attributes relating to the Advent of Christ, which, as you will recall, constitutes our primary focus in demonstrating God's control and faithfulness. Paul articulated this idea best when he said, "Don't let anyone judge you about food, or drink, or festivals, or new moons, or Sabbaths, which are all but *shadows of things to come*, but the substance is Christ."[109] This very thing, as we have already seen in the last chapter, is what happened when Annas confessed to Pilate that because they had discovered that Moses had been instructed to build The Ark of the Covenant with the dimensions of *five and a half* cubits, they deduced from this seemingly random bit of information that the Messiah was to arrive on the stage of world history 5,500 years after Adam. In this, both Paul and Annas were doing exactly what Jesus had done when He compared the experience of Jonah in the belly of the whale with the death and resurrection of the Son of Man .[110]

That said, my purpose in analyzing the role of typology in apocryphal literature—en route to laying a foundation for revealing the hidden connection between the five *sacred* things—is to provide answers to questions that have, down through the ages, plagued anyone attempting to either believe or dismiss the truths found in *The Bible*. For those who wish to believe them, I would like to offer fresh hope in their quest to ground their faith in the promises of God; and for those who wish to dismiss them, I would like to offer an alternative to their outmoded conclusions based on short-sighted interpretations.

These questions pertain to so-called "truths" offered up by various preachers that, on the surface, may sound correct, but due to stale repetitions of shallow traditional views, they instead constitute so much useless pabulum. According to Paul, God has given "gifts" to His Church in the form of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, whose job it is to administer His word, which when done faithfully accomplishes God's stated purpose.

109 *Colossians* 2:16-17
110 *Matthew* 12:40; *Luke* 11:30

> His people are to be equipped to do His work in order to build up the Church, the body of Christ. That way we'll all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we become mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full stature of Christ. Then we'll no longer act like children, forever changing our minds just because someone's told us something different or because they deceived us by making a lie sound like the truth.[111]

All too often, however, humans want the purpose of God's Church to revolve around them and their needs, that is, to heal them, bless them, prosper them. But Paul insisted that the true purpose of these gift ministers is to bring the scattered individuals who comprise the Church into a "unity of faith," which can only come from a "knowledge of God's Son." Therefore, it behooves those who are attempting to become part of this body of Christ to find someone who can adequately inform them about what the Scriptures say about faith in Jesus Christ. Sadly, though, much of today's *Bible* teaching focuses on catering to the human needs of its parishioners as opposed to God's specified desire to build a body of believers who truly understand Who Jesus is.

Part of the problem, as I see it, rests squarely on the shoulders of those individuals who—while claiming to be gift ministers of God's word—willfully insist on feeding their unsuspecting congregations the same old stories, regurgitated from their pet *Bible* commentaries. Never mind that intelligent people with the courage to ask difficult questions prefer meaningful answers rather than trite homilies. Never mind that these so-called "gift ministers" seem to be so oblivious to the inconsistencies in their own teaching of God's word, in spite of the glaring contradictions that their worn out clichés attempt to gloss over. We are simply expected to marvel at their well-intentioned genius while we politely resist the urge to ask any question that might make our fellow saints think we have lost faith in the traditional interpretation of the brethren.

For example, as long as I can remember, I have been taught that when God asked Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a burnt

111 *Ephesians* 4:11-14

offering on Mount Moriah, it was supposedly a "type" of God offering up His Son Jesus as a sin offering on Calvary. In this comparison between Abraham and God, and between Isaac and Jesus, I could clearly see a direct correlation in theological terms. What is more, because I already had an appreciation for such cinematic concepts as "foreshadow" and "payoff," this interpretation of biblical history seemed quite plausible, as though God, the Cosmic Director of the Universe, had planned it so that we could not fail to recognize a connection between the two events. In fact, never once in all my years have I ever felt that such "parallels in time," so to speak, were not consistent with God's attempts to convey the truth of His plan of redemption throughout the ages.

To this very point, Cyrus H. Gordon spoke most eloquently:

> Scripture makes it quite clear that … Isaac was conceived through divine agency. Like the Mycenaean Greek heroes, Isaac could claim paternity at two levels; the human and the divine. His human father, through whom he obtained his specific position in his people's history, was Abraham; but his superhuman quality was derived from the deity that visited Sarah. This is of a piece with the dual paternity of Homeric heroes, who hold the office of their human fathers, but are supernatural because of their divine fathers… It is in every way conceivable that some of the original Isaac Cycle survived to re-echo in Christianity. Jesus derives His human office of Messianic King from Joseph, but His divine quality from His Divine Father. Moreover, the Church tradition that connects the sacrifice of Isaac with the sacrifice of Christ apparently rests on sound exegesis, for the sacrifice of Isaac would have meant not only the sacrifice of Abraham's son but of God's.[112]

Understood in this context, then, it has always made perfect sense to me that if Abraham were the father of faith, one could easily accept the view that Isaac was the son of faith. What I did find confusing, though, was the seemingly incomplete picture

112 *The Common Background of Greek and Hebrew Civilizations*, Cyrus H. Gordon, pp. 290-91

that the canonical record seemed to offer in the actions of Isaac in relation to those of Jesus. Let me explain what I mean.

To begin with, if Isaac is supposed to be a "type" of Christ in this scenario, then why does *The Book of Genesis* depict him as an ignorant, little boy who has no idea what his father is planning for him? In my view, this could never adequately fulfill the typology of Christ, Whom the Scriptures tell us, repeatedly, was a willing participant in drinking from the cup of suffering prepared by God. "I'm the Good Shepherd," Jesus said. "The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. The reason My Father loves Me is because I lay down My life—only to take it up again. No one takes My life, but I willingly offer it on My own."[113] So if I am to believe in the unerring word of God, how can the traditional picture of an ignorant son of Abraham qualify as the devoted Son of God? To me, this has always presented a lingering contradiction, even as I have tried to reconcile this blatant gap in terms of what *The Bible* is supposedly offering as God's control over every stream of history. No wonder intelligent people continue to question the teaching of preachers who sanctimoniously offer up the Lord as the Omnipotent Master of the Universe, yet He Himself, it seems, is just as determined as they are to sidestep such nagging inconsistencies in His word.

So imagine my reaction when I came upon the story of Abraham and Isaac in the apocryphal literature. In *The Book of Jasher*, I had finally come upon a rendering that satisfied my desire to prove that God actually knew what He was doing with Isaac when He set out to prepare humanity to recognize what He would someday accomplish with Jesus at Calvary. In *Jasher*, we are presented with a picture that adequately fleshes out the idea that not only did Jesus fulfill His destiny as the obedient Son of God, but Isaac also fulfilled his role as a genuine type of Christ when he made that fateful journey to Mount Moriah with his father.

But before we look at the scenario presented in *Jasher*, let us take a moment to examine what would be required of Isaac to ensure that he might truly be called a type of Christ. First of all, unlike the canonical record implies, Isaac could not have been a mere child who was not yet old enough to act on his own accord. If Isaac had been a child, then he still would have been

113 *John* 10:11, 17-18

under the jurisdiction of Abraham, and any action performed by Isaac, the boy, could not rightly be compared to those being performed by Jesus, the adult. Furthermore, Isaac would have to know why he was going to Mount Moriah with his father. He would have to fully appreciate the fact that he was going to be killed and presented as a burnt offering to the Lord. And above all, he would have to willingly consent to the wishes of Abraham in what was being done to him. Without any one of these necessary components, the idea that Isaac represents a type of Christ is simply not consistent with any form of logic that I am aware of; and anyone who says otherwise is either stubbornly ignorant, or worse still, downright hypocritical. But fear not, God is quite capable of making sure that all the streams of history conform to His will, because as the story is revealed in *Jasher*, all these criteria have been adequately met. Let us see for ourselves, then, how all these elements come together in *Jasher*'s depiction of the drama of Isaac as it pertains to Abraham's most important mission to Moriah.

> When Isaac was thirty-seven years old, Ishmael was visiting him in his tent.
>
> "I was thirteen," said Ishmael to Isaac, "when the Lord told Father to circumcise us. I gave my life to Him, and since then I've never disobeyed."
>
> "Why brag to me about something like that?" asked Isaac. "You cut off a piece of your skin because the Lord told you to. As the God of Abraham lives, if He told Father to cut me into pieces and burn me as an offering, I wouldn't hesitate. I'd gladly consent."
>
> And when the Lord heard what Isaac said to Ishmael, He decided that it would be exactly how He would test Abraham.[114]

The first thing that one cannot help but notice in this account is that according to *Jasher*, Isaac was not a mere child as the canonical record implies. He was actually thirty-seven years old. So why would *Genesis* describe Isaac as a lad? The word *lad* denotes a child, not a thirty-seven year old man. Why the discrepancy, then? Did Moses make a mental error when he penned

114 *Jasher* 22:41-45

Genesis? The discrepancy lies, I believe, in the simple fact that when Moses wrote his version of the story, he knew full well that human beings lived much longer in those days. Based on the apocryphal record, when Abraham was eighty-seven years old, his great-great-grandfather Reu, the son of Peleg, died at the age of two hundred and thirty-nine.[115] And when Isaac was one hundred and ten years old, Shem, the son of Noah, died at the ripe old age of six hundred.[116] These numbers are also borne out by the canonical record, so by no means was Moses making a mental error when he described Isaac as a mere lad; he was simply describing the situation based on his understanding of the life spans of that era.

In retrospect, the discrepancy lies not in the numbers given to us by Moses but in the fact that we all judge things in relation to our own particular frame of reference. And when this reality, which was simply taken for granted by the biblical authors, is accounted for, it seems quite natural that Moses would call Isaac a lad, even though we moderns would never describe a thirty-seven-year-old man in that way. With this in mind, then, one can easily see that Isaac was, in reality, an adult, and as such can now be considered responsible for any of his own decisions, just as any normal adult might be.

The next thing one will notice is that, far from being ignorant of his father's intention in offering him up as a sacrifice to God, Isaac was actually the one who first thought of the idea. Of course, at the time, he could have never anticipated the possibility that God might actually take him up on his brash offer. Meanwhile, I can almost hear some people ask the inevitable question: Why would God make Isaac go through such a harrowing ordeal simply because he was the one who suggested it first? Is He some kind of cosmic sadist? If by that do you mean to ask: Is God in the habit of helping people perform any and all foolish acts because He enjoys watching people suffer? Then, no, He most assuredly is not a sadist.

Instead, what we have here, when one cares to examine *The Bible* as a whole, is simply another situation where God finds someone who has chosen to do something that He can use to communicate His purpose to an onlooking world. The same

115 *Jasher* 16:22
116 Ibid. 28:24

could be said when Enoch agreed to go along with the angels in his ascension to Heaven. Before God found that He could use Isaac to communicate what it means to be a type of Christ, He found Enoch. Though fearful of losing his life in the process, Enoch willingly accepted the inherent risk in ascending into the very presence of Almighty God. Thus, he became a heavenly mediator of His word, just as Jesus ascended to His Father where He continues to act as the eternal mediator between God and humanity.[117]

Subsequent to Enoch and Isaac, there was Moses, who also functioned as a type of Christ. In turning his back on the riches of Egypt in order to fulfill his calling as the deliverer of the Hebrews, Moses foreshadowed what one day Jesus would do, in emptying Himself of His divine power in the Incarnation and dying a cruel death on a Roman cross in order to provide a ransom for the people of God.[118]

In the case of Abraham and Isaac, then, God saw the same potential to lay down a shadow of things to come concerning the death and resurrection of His own Son, Jesus, when Isaac volunteered himself as a sacrificial offering. And though Isaac's desire to demonstrate his love and devotion to his father was a noble one, he certainly must have regretted it while having to follow through with his pledge by actually going to Mount Moriah with Abraham. Naturally, from a strictly humanistic point of view, Isaac could never have imagined that God would eventually provide a substitute in the form of a ram, who having appeared out of nowhere was sacrificed by his father instead of him. In this, the canonical record is again misleading. According to *Genesis*, Isaac, in being led up the mountain, appeared completely ignorant as to his father's intention.

> As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to Abraham, "Father?"
>
> "Yes, my son?"
>
> "The fire and wood are here," said Isaac, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"
>
> And Abraham answered, "God Himself will pro-

117 *Secrets of Enoch* 1-68
118 *Hebrews* 11:24-27

vide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son."

And the two of them continued on together.[119]

In *Jasher*, however, Isaac is portrayed in a much different way. To be sure, he is afraid of the situation into which he has gotten himself. He does undeniably waver, quite naturally. Who among us would not have done so if we were thrust into that same situation? He was, after all, only human, and in this it was to be the same with the human side of Jesus. Though the Son of God, the Incarnate One in human flesh, yet He likewise prayed in His darkest hour that the cup of God's wrath might pass from before Him. Still, as the obedient Son that He was, He willingly accepted the role that had been foreordained for Him before the foundations of the world had been laid. And as Jesus revealed His own humanity in a moment of overwhelming dread, so, too, did Isaac momentarily buckle under the pressure. Says *Jasher*:

> And Isaac carried the wood for the burnt offering while Abraham held the torch and the knife. After walking along in silence for quite a while, Isaac stopped and turned to Abraham. "Father, I see the fire, and I see the wood, but where's the lamb to burn on the altar?"
>
> "Oh, Isaac, you already know that the Lord has chosen you to be the burnt offering, not a lamb."
>
> Isaac tried his best to smile. "Yes, Father, I know. Then, I'll happily do everything the Lord told you."
>
> "You don't think what we're doing is wrong, do you?" asked Abraham. "Tell me now, son. Please, don't try to hide anything from me."
>
> "As the Lord lives, Father, nothing is going to keep us from doing what God wants. I'm completely resolved. In fact, I thank the Lord for choosing me to be a burnt offering for Him."
>
> Relieved, Abraham hugged his son, and they resumed their journey.
>
> Soon, they arrived at the place that the Lord had described, and Abraham began to build an altar on that mountain. He cried as Isaac went around gathering

119 *Genesis* 22:6-8

stones and mortar to help him complete it. Then, placing the wood on the altar, he began tying up Isaac.

"Make sure the rope is good and tight, Father. That way I can't roll around. I don't want to ruin the offering by breaking loose when your knife cuts me."

So Abraham tied him securely with cords and carefully placed him atop the pile of wood.

"And Father, please, promise me you'll take some of my ashes to Mother. Tell her: This is the sweet-smelling savor of Isaac. But make sure you don't tell her if she's sitting near a well or anywhere high up. I don't want her throwing herself off trying to come after me."

Abraham cried even more. His tears spilled onto Isaac, who started crying, too. "Hurry, Father, do with me as God has instructed."

Strangely enough, though, their hearts rejoiced in what the Lord had told them to do. Outwardly they wept, while inwardly they celebrated. Then, Isaac stretched his neck out for his father, and Abraham raised the knife, preparing to cut his son's throat.[120]

From all this added detail, found only in the apocryphal record, one can clearly see that Isaac was not at all ignorant of what his father had in store for him. Though Abraham's son was human and Jesus was both human and divine, the two were yet one in spirit. Both were adults of sound mind and body, both willingly offered themselves to their father's will as supreme proof of their love and devotion, and both completed their journeys to the bitter end. Away forever, then, with the idea that just because the canonical version unnecessarily waters down a genuine parallel between these two heroes of *The Bible*, never let it be said that Isaac, the faithful son of Abraham, was not in every respect a worthy type of Christ, the obedient Son of God, after all.

Mining the Depths

HAVING DEMONSTRATED the awesome potential of the apocryphal record to elicit a deeper appreciation of the role of

120 *Jasher* 23:49-65

typology in Scripture, I would next like to elaborate on its ability in this regard. What I am about to undertake will, as far as I know, constitute a new thing never before discussed within the confines of theology. Yet, hopefully, it will be received with due consideration. My endeavor in this is two-fold: First, I hope to cement the validity of any remarks that I have already made concerning the authenticity of the apocryphal record. Second, I hope to place such a firm capstone on its authenticity that anyone who has been reading this presentation will become so convinced they will continue the journey throughout the rest of this work.

The capstone I am speaking of involves another familiar chapter in the Biblical Canon, though as we have seen in the previous illustration, a version that is distinctly watered-down. It is the moment in *The Old Testament* when Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob, after being elevated as the viceroy of Egypt, is trying to decide if he should reveal his identity to the brothers who had many years earlier sold him into slavery. And just as the story of Abraham and Isaac has been told and retold to countless generations, so the story of Joseph and his brothers has also been the subject of many a church sermon or Sunday school lesson.

The generally accepted significance of this scene, like nearly every other phase of Joseph's life, is that it represents yet another type of Christ, just as Enoch and Isaac before him and as Moses, David, and Jonah after him. In fact, so many comparisons can be made between the lives of Joseph and Jesus that biblical scholars have surmised there are no less than seventy ways in which Joseph can be considered a type of Christ.

To name just a handful of parallels, consider this: Both Joseph and Jesus were quite outspoken about their glorious futures in which they were fated to rule as kings, and as a result they engendered skepticism, animosity, and hatred from their family members.[121] Subsequently, both men—though destined for greatness—were imprisoned at the instigation of their own brothers.[122] Both were punished in the company of two other men, of which one was to be spared and the other condemned—Joseph, in prison, encountered Pharaoh's butler

121 *Genesis* 37:5-8; *Mark* 6:1-6

122 *Genesis* 37:18-24; *Matthew* 26:47-50

and baker, while Jesus, on the cross, hung alongside one thief to His right and another to His left.[123] Similarly, the evils that were perpetrated upon Joseph and Jesus were providentially "turned inside out," so to speak. Rather than destroying the two men, the very circumstances that should have obliterated them led to their eventual exaltation. In the process, both men endured the pangs of death, yet both were ultimately rescued and glorified by a miracle of God.[124] And after being supernaturally elevated to the royal position that was prophetically anticipated for them, neither of them was immediately recognized by the very brothers who had been instrumental in their degradation and near demise.[125] In these and many more ways, Joseph can be regarded as the most fully developed type of Christ to be found in all *The Bible*.

However—notwithstanding all of these remarkable similarities—my focus here in light of our study of typology will be somewhat different in its approach from most other biblical treatises on the subject of Joseph as a type of Christ. The reason for this is my desire to demonstrate the authenticity of the apocryphal literature, which has waited far too long to be appreciated for its true potential in mining the depths of God's revelation. And considering that the apocryphal record goes into so much more detail in terms of character development and storyline than do the canonical texts, it would not surprise me that once they are fully appreciated for their genuine value, they might one day enjoy the same respectability they originally knew before they were unjustly stigmatized.

Having said all that, I would like to proceed with a completely new insight into the life of Joseph, especially as it pertains to his momentous decision to reveal himself to brothers who were acting as hostile outsiders in their quest to obtain food for their starving families still living in famine-stricken Canaan. According to *Genesis*, when the ten sons of Jacob were forced to beg Joseph for food, they initially had no idea who they were dealing with.[126] Then, because Jacob had refused to allow his youngest son, Benjamin—Joseph's only brother by

123 *Genesis* 40:1-23; *Luke* 23:32-43
124 *Psalm* 105:17-22; *First Peter* 1:18-21
125 *Genesis* 42:6-8; *Luke* 13-16
126 *Genesis* 42:3-8

Rachel—Joseph stooped to subterfuge in order to get them to bring him to Egypt.[127]

Eventually, all eleven of Joseph's brothers stood before him, though they were still ignorant of his true identity.[128] It was then that Joseph resorted to one last bit of chicanery. Before he allowed his brothers to return to Palestine with the food they had bought, he instructed his Egyptian servants to hide his silver chalice in Benjamin's bag and to follow the brothers on their way back home. But before they could cross the border, Joseph's servants were to stop them and declare that their master's silver cup had been stolen. Then upon searching through the brother's baggage, they were to reveal that the chalice was in Benjamin's possession. At that point, the group was returned to Joseph with Benjamin as their prisoner, accused of stealing the royal cup from the viceroy.[129]

Naturally, the ten brothers were mortified, vehemently declaring their innocence before Joseph and resorting to every form of histrionics in the process.[130] Eventually, Joseph could stand it no longer. Ordering all his Egyptian attendants out of the room, he finally broke down and, in a tear-filled moment, revealed that he was their long-lost brother. At first, according to the canonical record, none of the brothers believed him, more terrified than skeptical, considering that this powerful man might have another trick up his sleeve.[131] What apparently turned the tide in his efforts was the way in which Joseph, who perceived the foresight of God in his ordeal, was able to convince them that he had been divinely guided to his present position in order to provide a way of escape to Jacob and his descendants.[132] So, as the story goes, after much insistence, the brothers finally came to the realization that this grown man really was the same boy they had so callously imprisoned in a bitter act of jealousy.[133]

But notice how I said: As the story goes. The reason for this is because in our previous example, when using only the ca-

127 *Genesis* 42:9-18
128 Ibid. 43:29
129 Ibid. 44:1-13
130 Ibid. 44:14-34
131 Ibid. 45:1-3
132 Ibid. 45:4-11
133 Ibid. 45:12-15

nonical record as our source, the notion of Abraham and Isaac representing a type of God and Christ was found to be inadequate. Only when we turned to the apocryphal literature did we find the necessary elements required to call the drama of Abraham and Isaac a true type in theological terms. In the same way, the idea that Joseph revealing himself to his brothers represents another type of Christ seems, on the surface, a legitimate claim. Upon further review, however, certain elements of the traditional account simply fail to add up. Let me take some time to explain what I mean.

As you will recall, in order for someone to fulfill the role of a true type, they must, by necessity, correspond in kind to the substance, which is Christ. In other words, what history records as having occurred in the life of Jesus should correspond in the previous personage who is said to be a shadow of Him Who was to come—in this instance, Joseph. So what should one expect to find in this supposed correspondence? According to most theologians, the reason that Joseph is pointed to as a type of Christ is because, even though he sat before them as the viceroy of Egypt, his brothers did not recognize him until he revealed his true identity as their long-lost brother. This, say the experts, corresponds to the fact that even though Jesus was the Omnipotent Son of the Most High, his fellow man did not recognize Him as such until He revealed Himself after the resurrection.

The only problem with this comparison, while sounding perfectly plausible, actually breaks down when one simply takes the time to ask a few difficult—and by difficult I mean uncomfortable—questions. For example, to test whether or not this scenario bears itself out as a genuine type, one must review the scene as *Genesis* plays it for us. In it, we find that none of Joseph's brothers ever recognized him as the viceroy of Egypt; therefore, to be a true type of Christ, one would expect to find that no one among the Children of Israel ever recognized the true identity of Jesus until after His glorification via the resurrection.

But clearly this interpretation does not correspond with the actual facts of biblical history, because obviously the twelve disciples of Christ were among those who, even before the resurrection, recognized the kingship of Jesus of Nazareth.

> When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"
>
> They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."
>
> "But what about you?" He asked. "Who do you say I am?"
>
> Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God."
>
> Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man but by my Father in Heaven."[134]

So if the disciples recognized Jesus as the long-awaited Son of God prior to His exaltation, how, then, can one view the life of Joseph as a true type of Christ? One of the necessary elements of correspondence is missing, even if it appears at first glance to be a minor one.

In addition to this inconsistency, there is also the mystery of why Joseph went to such lengths to incriminate his younger brother, Benjamin. What could have possibly been the point of such a charade? Clearly, Joseph had succeeded in humiliating his brothers, if that was his true intention in repeatedly deceiving them, but as to the actual motive of such a complicated game of intrigue the canonical record does not provide the slightest clue. Fortunately, though, there is another view of this same scenario to be found in the apocryphal record. And just as before, it is in *The Book of Jasher*, where not only the answers to these perplexing questions can be found but also all the necessary elements that are required to view the life of Joseph as a true type of Christ.

Let us take a moment to outline some of the things one should expect to find if Joseph were a type of Christ before we turn to the record in *Jasher*. First, if the disciples of Jesus recognized His kingship before the rest of the Children of Israel, then one would expect to find some correspondence in the case of Joseph and his brothers. Moreover, when one considers the strange trial that Benjamin was forced to endure at the hands

134 *Matthew* 16:13-17

of the viceroy of Egypt, one would expect to find some kind of similar correspondence in the life of the Shepherd-King of Nazareth. Certainly, I can already hear some asking: Is not this a rather tall order? How can one ever hope to find such a correspondence? Besides, so what if there is a correlation between these events in the apocryphal literature? What could it possibly add to our understanding of *The Bible*? And how could it possibly help solidify a correct adjustment in our view of Joseph as a true type of Christ? The answer, I believe, might astound even the most ardent skeptic; and it goes as follows.

In *Jasher*, we find that Joseph arranged for a great feast where he gathered his eleven brothers, and under the pretext of using his silver chalice of divination, he told them that he was able to discern their birth orders. As a result, he sat them at the dinner table accordingly, and declaring that because Benjamin was the youngest son among them and was, like himself, without a brother, he wished to have him seated next him on his throne.[135]

> Then, Joseph ordered his servants to bring him his map of the stars of Heaven whereby Joseph knew all the times, and Joseph said to Benjamin, "I've heard that the Hebrews are acquainted with all wisdom. Are you aware of anything like this?"
>
> "Yes, I am," replied Benjamin. "I learned all about it from my father."
>
> And Joseph said to him, "Good, then look at this instrument and tell me if you're able to discover the present location of your brother Joseph, who you said went down to Egypt."
>
> So Benjamin looked at the map of the stars and concentrated very hard, hoping to perceive within its contents the whereabouts of Joseph. To do this, Benjamin divided the land of Egypt into four sections and eventually came to discern that the one who was sitting upon the throne before him was his brother. Astonished at this revelation, Benjamin looked up at Joseph with ever-widening eyes.
>
> Seeing the odd look on Benjamin's face, Joseph

135 *Jasher* 53:10-13

asked, "What is it? What have you seen? Why do you look so amazed?"

And Benjamin replied, "I can see by this instrument that Joseph, my brother, sits before me, here on this very throne."

Then, with a wry smile, Joseph said to him, "Very good, Benjamin. Yes, it's true; I am your brother Joseph. But I don't want you to reveal this to your brothers."

Confused, Benjamin asked, "But why?"

"Because I plan on testing them, that's why. Because I need to find out, once and for all, what is yet in the hearts of the men who threw me into that miserable pit so long ago. Don't be afraid, Benjamin, but I'm planning on taking you away from them. And if they're willing to risk their lives and fight for your sake, I'll know they've repented of what they did to me, and I'll reveal myself to them. But if they forsake you when I've taken you from them, then you'll remain with me. I'll contest their right to you as a brother and send them away empty-handed, and in the end, I'll never let them know who I really am."[136]

How, then, does the apocryphal record differ from the canonical version? First, it reveals that not all of Joseph's brothers were ignorant of his identity prior to his revealing who he was to the entire group. In this, we are a step closer to a more accurate comparison to that of Jesus, Who also was recognized by His disciples prior to Him revealing His true nature after His resurrection. Now, of course, I can already anticipate some people questioning such a need for this alteration in the events of Christ's revealing of Himself. Some might insist that, even though Jesus revealed Himself after the resurrection to His disciples, the whole world will not be privy to this revelation until He returns in His Second Coming in clouds of glory, where He reveals Himself to all humanity. But I insist that this has never been the context of Joseph's revealing his true identity. The crux of this scenario is Joseph and his brothers, not Joseph and the Egyptians, which in such a case would represent the world in general. It is unquestionably a story of Joseph as a type of

136 *Jasher* 53:18-22

Christ in which he is revealing himself to brothers who were all recipients of the promises of Abraham, yet who had abused that high calling when they jealously sought to eliminate him. In this context the fact that, unlike in *Genesis*, one of his brothers—that is, Benjamin—recognized who he was, we finally have a new reason to better appreciate Joseph as a true type of Christ.

What is more, the fact that Benjamin is the first among his brothers to recognize Joseph is no mere accident in the providence of God. In this, we have a direct correspondence between the events of Joseph in Egypt and those of Jesus in Palestine, because it is well known among biblical historians that after their release from the Babylonian captivity the descendants of none other than Benjamin came to inhabit the territory in Judea that is identified with Galilee. What does this mean in terms of our examination of Joseph as a type of Christ? It means that when Jesus was recognized for Who He was in Galilee, He was first being recognized by men who just happened to be descendants of Benjamin. Of this connection between Galilee and the ministry of Jesus, biblical scholars are quick to point out the verse in Matthew's Gospel:

> And when Jesus had heard that John the Baptist had been put in prison, He returned to Galilee. Leaving Nazareth, He went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali, in order to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah: "The land of Zebulun and Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan—Galilee of the Nations—the people living in darkness have seen a great light. On those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned."[137]

In these Galileans, then, what we see are men of the tribe of Benjamin, who were the first to accept the teaching of Jesus, that is, those who were the first to perceive the "great light" of Messiah. In doing so, they constitute nothing less than the fulfillment of the original type of Benjamin himself, who was the first among the sons of Jacob to recognize Joseph for who he really was.

137 *Matthew* 4:12-15

Furthermore, there is a remarkable twist that clinches the notion of Benjamin being a type of the first "seers" of Christ. As it turns out, when Judas Iscariot—the only man among the original twelve disciples who was not a Benjamite—hung himself, the disciple whom God chose to replace him, Paul of Tarsus, was, in fact, born of the tribe of Benjamin.[138]

Then consider another unique aspect to biblical history. In one of the most peculiar stories in *The Old Testament*, the tribe of Benjamin was nearly wiped from the face of the Earth when they refused to cooperate in bringing to justice a group of criminals within their midst. In a chapter reminiscent of a modern-day horror story, a man's concubine was brutally raped by thugs during their travels through the territory of Benjamin. After his concubine died as a result of her ordeal, the man was so outraged by the wanton nature of the crime against her, he did the unthinkable. In an act of unmitigated fury, he cut her body into twelve pieces and sent the separate parts into all the tribes in blatant protest.

Horrified delegates from eleven of the tribes demanded that the rapists who had caused the death of this woman be handed over to answer for their crime. But for some unknown reason, the Benjamites refused to comply with their request. At that point, a civil war ensued in which the eleven tribes aligned themselves against the single tribe of Benjamin. Initially, the Benjamites unleashed tremendous casualties against their opponents, but eventually they succumbed to the sheer numbers of the combined forces of the other tribes. In the end, the overmatched Benjamites suffered catastrophic losses.

Then, to make matters even worse, in retribution for their actions, the rest of the tribes established a law amongst themselves to never again allow any of their women to marry a Benjamite. These two factors combined with devastating effect, nearly annihilating this tribe with such an important role in the salvation of mankind. Eventually, however, the rest of the tribes regretted what they had done and made special arrangements to give a large sum of their women to them so they could replenish their diminished population, thereby averting their extinction.[139]

138 *Romans* 11:1
139 *Judges* 19-21

Later, God, though just as angry as the rest of the tribes for what the Benjamites had done, understood all too well the importance of their future role. When the Lord was ordering the division of the Kingdom of Israel—to the north and to the south—God declared:

> However, I will not tear away the whole kingdom. I will give one tribe (speaking of the Benjamites) to your son (speaking of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, the king of Judah) for the sake of My servant David and for Jerusalem, which I have chosen. And to his son (Rehoboam) I will give one tribe (the Benjamites) that My servant David may always have a light before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Myself, to put My name there.[140]

In this single promise, we see both the tragedy and the hope of the descendants of Benjamin, the light-bearer son of Jacob. In it, we see the light of awareness in the eyes of the first one to recognize the man who had been miraculously transformed from the irritating boy with dreams of glory. In it, we see the same awareness in the eyes of the first men who though "living in the land of the shadow of death" recognized that the One speaking to them was the Light of the World. And in it, we see the unspeakable fury of the enemy of God's people (speaking of Satan) who would do anything he could to inspire the obliteration of this special tribe in order to avert the possibility of such a momentous promise of God from ever coming to fruition.

Yet, thankfully, God is in charge, and ultimately the descendants of Benjamin were able to fulfill their destiny in a most remarkable fashion. After the Babylonian captivity, they journeyed back to Palestine, occupying the land that just happened to include the future territory of Galilee, where Jesus would one day venture, there to be recognized first by the men who could all trace their heritage to the one whom God had ordained as a perpetual light in Israel.

And on a more poignant note, there is further prophetic significance concerning Benjamin's ultimate destiny, in this case in the unique capacity of a dual role, as both a seer of the light

140 *First Kings* 11:13, 36

and as a light-bearer himself, because not only is Galilee located in his territory but the famed city of Bethlehem resides there as well. To better understand the relationship between the birthplace of Jesus and its links to Benjamin, one must read a brief but potent section in *Matthew*, and by way of its contents, an astonishing connection will be revealed.

In the second chapter of his Gospel, Matthew tells of Herod's response to his visit from the three Magi who were seeking the Christ Child. From the Jewish priests and teachers, Herod received disturbing news when he asked them where this Christ was supposed to come from. They replied: "In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what the prophet has written: 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, though you are among the least of the tribes, out of you will come a Ruler Who will be the Shepherd of My people, Israel.'"[141]

Upon learning that the Magi had deceived him concerning the whereabouts of the Child, Herod the Great ordered the slaughter of all the male babies in and around Bethlehem. Then, continued Matthew, what was spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: "A voice is heard in Ramah, a tremendous mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted because they are no more."[142] Rachel, beloved wife of Jacob, and mother to both Joseph and Benjamin; Rachel, who died an untimely death giving birth to Benjamin, whose descendants upon returning to Palestine resided in the very territory in which the Christ was destined to be born.

Tell me, please, am I the only one who is amazed by all this connectivity? Am I the only one to appreciate that not only is Joseph a type of Christ in this scenario but that Benjamin—who received the promise that his descendants would be perpetual light-bearers among the Tribes of Israel—can himself be seen in a dual role as a type of both Christ and His disciples? I certainly hope I am not.

Echoes in Time

FINALLY, WE TURN TO the matter of the ordeal that Joseph put Benjamin through when he tricked his brothers into believ-

141 *Micah* 5:2
142 *Jeremiah* 31:15

ing he had stolen his royal chalice. And in reviewing this act of Joseph testing his brothers, we will again have a chance to marvel at the precision with which the apocryphal literature portrays Joseph as a type of Christ, and Benjamin as a type of the twelve disciples of Christ, who having first recognized Jesus as the Messiah were all destined to pay the ultimate price.

As we have seen in our previous examination of the sequence of events, the *Genesis* account has Joseph insisting that the ten sons of Jacob bring their youngest brother Benjamin to Egypt if they were to expect to buy any more food for their families in Palestine.[143] Therefore, in order that his children avoid starvation, Jacob reluctantly consented to allow Benjamin to journey with his brothers to Egypt where Joseph treated all his brothers to a great feast.[144] Then, unlike the *Jasher* account that has Benjamin recognizing Joseph before any of his other brothers, the *Genesis* record immediately skips ahead to the part where Joseph instructed his servants to hide his silver chalice in Benjamin's bag. Then when the brothers left for home, the Egyptians, in staging their mock surprise search, placed Benjamin under arrest, whereupon all the brothers, disheartened and dismayed, marched back to confront Joseph.

Again, biblical historians who fail to acknowledge the apocryphal account of *Jasher* can only speculate as to the exact nature of Joseph's action, causing some to correctly infer that Joseph was testing his brothers. However, as to the precise motives that led Joseph to force this test upon his brothers, based on the disparity of opinion, is apparently anybody's guess. Whether he was motivated by revenge, anger, or simply a petty desire to humiliate his brothers for what they had done to him, none can, with only *Genesis* as their guide, say for sure. Only *Jasher* takes the time to provide the parenthetical explanation to reveal the specific motive of Joseph, who said to Benjamin:

> Because I need to find out, once and for all, what is yet in the hearts of the men who threw me into that miserable pit so long ago. Don't be afraid, Benjamin, but I'm planning on taking you away from them. And if they're willing to risk their lives and fight for your sake,

143 *Genesis* 43:1-5
144 Ibid. 43:29-34

> I'll know they've repented of what they did to me, and I'll reveal myself to them. But if they forsake you when I've taken you from them, then you'll remain with me. I'll contest their right to you as a brother and send them away empty-handed, and in the end, I'll never let them know who I really am.[145]

Fortunately, for all involved, the brothers—spearheaded by Judah—did fight to rescue Benjamin from the clutches of the viceroy of Egypt. After much discussion, heated and impassioned, Joseph finally chose to reveal himself to the entire group.

> I'm your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! But don't be distressed or angry with yourselves for selling me to this place, because it was really God Who did all this, sending me ahead of you in order to save lives. He sent me ahead so He could preserve our family on this Earth by means of a great deliverance. So it wasn't really you who sent me here but God.[146]

In this, of course, both the canonical and apocryphal accounts agree. The only thing that differs in the two versions is the critical role of Benjamin found only in *Jasher*. It is this role of the youngest son of Jacob that we will be taking a closer look at in our examination of Benjamin as a type of the disciples of Christ, together with Joseph as a type of Christ Himself. Until now, we have focused on Joseph and Jesus as the main characters of our investigation, while whatever roles that Benjamin or the disciples have played, they have done so in a merely supportive capacity. But in the final portion of this chapter, we will be elevating the bit players to that of "primary cast members," as it were, so as we turn our attention to Benjamin as a type of the disciples of Christ, we will portray them as the main characters of the following drama.

And just as a more thorough study of Abraham's offering of his son, and Joseph's revealing himself to his brothers has provided a fresh appreciation of the theme of shadow and sub-

145 *Jasher* 53:21-22
146 *Genesis* 45:4-8

stance, our examination of Joseph's testing of his brothers in regard to Benjamin will also provide a deeper awareness of this continuing theme. The reason for this is because, as it turns out, the testing of Joseph's brothers revealed a critically important truth to both Joseph and a world that still looks back upon this chapter in the history of God's people. And as so often happens in the process of historical hindsight, this backward look speaks not only of the character of the sons of Jacob in the life of Joseph, the viceroy of Egypt, but also of the people of Israel in the life of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

But as usual, in order to attain this fresh awareness, one must step away from the canonical version, which has left out so many necessary elements, and return again to the apocryphal record. According to *Jasher*, after Joseph confided in Benjamin concerning the test that he had in mind for his other brothers, the viceroy instructed his servants to hide his royal cup of divination in the bag of his younger brother. Then, when his servants stopped the caravan that was headed back to Palestine, the Egyptians were to conduct their search of all the men's bags. Naturally, because they were so convinced that none of them had stolen Joseph's cup, they were quite indignant with such a baseless accusation. Boldly, they declared that if their master's chalice were found among them then the one who had stolen it would die by their own hand, and they would become slaves to the Egyptians.[147] And when Joseph's servants opened Benjamin's bag, they took out the silver cup, much to the dismay of the entire group. Horrified, the brothers all tore their clothes.

According to Louis Ginzberg, this constituted another example of divine judgment—as described in a previous chapter—whereby God repays anyone committing a sin, "coin for coin," so to speak. So, said Ginzberg, as the brothers had caused their grieving father to tear his clothes when they lied to him about Joseph being killed by a wild beast, they were now, providentially, being led in their despair to tear their own clothes as a form of divinely-inspired justice.[148]

Next came the unexpected aspect of Joseph's trial regarding his brothers. Certainly, his stated intention was to find out

147 *Jasher* 53:23-26

148 *The Legends of the Jews, Volume 2: From Joseph to the Exodus*, Louis Ginzberg, p. 100

if they would fight for Benjamin once he had been returned to Egypt. In Joseph's view, this act of fighting for their youngest brother would provide proof enough that they had, as he put it, repented of the evil they had done to him. However, I am quite sure, despite Joseph's confirmed powers of divination, he did not anticipate the dire consequences that his act of trickery would bring down upon Benjamin. On their return journey to answer the charge of theft, however baseless it may have been, the sheer frustration of their ordeal caused an emotional implosion among the brothers, who were all convinced that this would surely bring an end to their aged father's happiness, if not his very life. Not only had they recklessly committed themselves to Egyptian servitude, but, just as Jacob had inadvertently cursed his own wife, Rachel, under similar circumstances,[149] they had also committed Benjamin into the hands of the executioner. This tragic realization, together with their fear of the potential consequences of their complicity in Joseph's disappearance, would inevitably catalyze into an all-consuming force in the brothers as they headed back to Egypt. And that was to exorcise their guilt on the one person who, in their view, represented the emotional foci of all their wrongdoing to that point: Benjamin.

In this case, their overwhelming grief, as so often happens with people under intense duress, came out in a most unexpected way. According to *Jasher*, as they were returning to face their accusers, the sons of Jacob repeatedly struck Benjamin along the way.[150] Not only did they physically assault him, but they afflicted him psychologically as well, referring to the time when his mother Rachel stole her father's religious icons.[151] Jeered one of the brothers: "You miserable thief and the son of a thief, no less. Just look at how you've shamed us, just like your mother brought shame upon our father."[152]

But through it all, Benjamin silently bore the pain of his brothers' physical and verbal abuse, and, Ginzberg added, for humbly submitting to the blows upon his back, God rewarded

149 *Genesis* 31:32; 35:16-20

150 *Jasher* 53:27

151 *Genesis* 31:19-37

152 *The Legends of the Jews, Volume 2: From Joseph to the Exodus*, Louis Ginzberg, p. 100

him.[153] In the blessing given by Moses, Benjamin was called "the beloved of the Lord," and it was appointed that the Holy Spirit would "dwell safely and securely between his shoulders."[154] That is to say, the Temple of God would reside in Jerusalem, a city famously flanked by the two most dominant of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Above it lies the territory of Joseph, chief of the ten tribes to the north, and below it, the territory of Judah, chief of the two tribes to the south.

Yet even as the brothers outwardly unleashed their rage upon their innocent brother, inwardly they were ashamed of themselves, because in their dire predicament they could clearly see the providential hand of judgment. As the brothers stood contritely before the viceroy of Egypt, Judah uttered this veiled confession:

> How do we plead to the charge that we stole your royal cup? We know all too well we are innocent. Yet we admit we do not stand completely innocent in our present situation, because God has obviously ensnared us in this, like a creditor Who goes about seeking to collect an outstanding debt that is owed to Him.[155]

That said, let us return to our present investigation of Benjamin as a type of the disciples of Christ. In the previous scenario, notice that Benjamin not only recognized Joseph before any of his siblings, just as the disciples of Benjamite ancestry first recognized Jesus for Who He was, but there is also the added dimension of Benjamin having physically suffered at the hands of his brothers. In other words, the smiting of Benjamin by his own brothers clearly constitutes a precursor to the persecution of the disciples by the people comprising the kingdoms of both Judah and Israel. Having rejected the lordship of the humble Nazarene and eliminating Him—in their minds, at least—they next proceeded to unleash their fury upon His apparently defenseless followers.

As a matter of fact, the importance of the events surround-

153 *The Legends of the Jews, Volume 2: From Joseph to the Exodus*, Louis Ginzberg, p. 101

154 *Deuteronomy* 33:12

155 *The Legends of the Jews, Volume 2: From Joseph to the Exodus*, Louis Ginzberg, p. 102

ing the scattering and subsequent martyrdom of the disciples of Jesus goes far beyond the immediate circumstances of their collective deaths. What is most important about their otherwise tragic ends is that they were able to bequeath to humanity in death something far beyond what they could have ever given in life. To be sure, one might expect the world to be a better place as a result of the message of grace and peace that the disciples received from Jesus and then carried into every corner of the world after persecution forced them to flee Palestine. This, in and of itself, certainly could have constituted a singularly significant contribution to the enlightenment of world consciousness. Their message of love in the face of hatred, of tolerance in the face of persecution, of forgiveness in the face of condemnation, all of these revolutionary ideas might have been seen as tremendous contributions to the social development of humanity, had it not been for one overriding element to their lives that completely overshadowed everything else. Not only did these men penetrate a darkened world with the message they had received from their Teacher, but they also suffered martyrdom—all except for John, who miraculously survived every attempt on his life. That is unquestionably the ultimate legacy they have bestowed upon mankind. Had they merely wandered through life spouting their pleasantries of love, tolerance, and forgiveness to a typically disinterested population, in all probability they might have departed this life quite unharmed, yet never having made so much as a dent in the chink of the mighty armor of this God-forsaken world.

This might have remained their tepid and thoroughly forgettable legacy were it not for the fact that this bunch of heretofore-timid disciples insisted on repeating the same ludicrous story wherever they went. They all claimed, to a man, that this unassuming minister of grace and peace, Jesus of Nazareth, rose from the dead after three days and some forty days later bodily ascended to the right hand of God. So, for their persistent, unwavering position in this regard, they were forced to suffer the same agonizing death of which their Master had partaken.

In this degradation of the disciples of Jesus, one can see another type to be revealed in Scripture—this time in the humble submission of Benjamin, who as a type of the disciples of Christ similarly bore the self-loathing hatred of his kinsmen. Just as

everyone is a part of the same human family, born by Noah and his sons after the Flood, then overspread into every part of the globe, this greater family of mankind turned their anger upon that band of twelve and remorselessly sought to slay them in the hopes of banishing them from their collective memory.

At this stage, one would do well to remember the words of Joseph to his younger brother regarding the conditions of his trial:

> Don't be afraid, Benjamin, but I'm planning on taking you away from them. And if they're willing to risk their lives and fight for your sake, I'll know that they've repented of what they did to me, and I'll reveal myself to them. But if they forsake you when I've taken you from them, then you'll remain with me. I'll contest their right to you as a brother and send them away empty-handed, and in the end, I'll never let them know who I really am.[156]

My point, regarding our present understanding of typology, is that not only does Joseph represent Christ, and Benjamin represent His disciples, but the other ten sons of Jacob can also be seen to have their own counterparts in this unfolding drama of the ages. In this context, they constitute types of the larger population comprising the rest of the people of Israel, that is to say, the southern kingdom of Judah, which was residing in Palestine at the time of the crucifixion of Christ, as well as the northern kingdom of Israel, which had been many centuries earlier scattered throughout Western Europe.

Understand this, then, as one considers the implications of what Joseph expressed as the terms of his trial: Not only was he was speaking about how he would presently judge his brothers, but he was also speaking prophetically as to how his future counterpart, Jesus, would judge His human family. In this instance, the words of Joseph could just as easily be uttered by Jesus Himself so that the dialog might be seen accordingly: "If they fight for your sake, Benjamin (that is, if they fight for your sake, My disciples), then I, Joseph (that is, I, Jesus), will reveal Myself to them. But if they forsake you, I'll send them away

156 *Jasher* 53:21-22

empty-handed, and in the end, they'll never know who I really am."

Considering the facts of history, can anyone seriously argue that this is not what transpired? To those who received the teaching of the disciples of Jesus—to those who fed, sheltered, and protected them—the risen Lord revealed Himself, but to those who rejected, reviled, and hunted the disciples of Jesus wherever they traveled after having been driven from Palestine, the risen Lord deprived them of His revelation. What a remarkable fulfillment, then, of the drama of Joseph, Benjamin, and the rest of his brothers.

Like echoes in time, one drama foreshadows the next, and together they convey the awesome power of a God who knows all too well that His doubting creatures will require such reassurance in the face of so many generations of withering persecution. When one considers Satan's every attempt to abort the promises of God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it is one of the great mysteries of history that the whole enterprise has not collapsed in the face of such inhuman onslaughts. No wonder that the faithful would need an even firmer bulwark against the unthinkable when, after all the obvious enemies of God had been vanquished, an enemy even more insidious than Nimrod, Pharaoh, or Goliath would raise its ugly head. Now the most ominous threat that the faithful would have to endure would be those of their own household, that is, one's own brother, sister, father, mother. No longer would the enemies of faith be so obvious, as those who were counted among the heathen, as Cain or Esau, but as among the chosen sons of Jacob, the twelve pillars of the House of Israel—as Judah from whom the scepter would arise, and Levi from whom the Law of the Lord would be born.

> And when Joseph went looking for his brothers, they saw him coming from a distance, but before he reached them, they conspired to slay him. "Look, here comes the dreamer," they said to one another. "Why don't we kill him and throw him down a pit? Then we'll see what happens to all his dreams."[157]

157 *Genesis* 37:18-19

Who could have ever believed that something like this could be within the scope of God's plan? Certainly, it must be an aberration. Certainly, God never foresaw that something like this would happen. God forbid; He saw it all. But before it ever happened, He made sure to prepare His chosen ones for its tragic eventuality. Since time immemorial, He prepared their hearts in order that they might endure it, just as the Master Himself was to endure the same fate at the hands of His own brothers, His own creation. Before Jesus endured it, God led Joseph through it, and before the disciples of Christ, He led Benjamin. In this way, each generation of the faithful is sufficiently prepared in order that we all might resist the urge to doubt that He is yet in the midst of circumstances that so often seem devoid of God's presence. And instead of losing our grip in the heat of battle, we can hold on even tighter in the knowledge that before He led us into our own mess called "the stuff of life," many others have already trodden the same path.

Patterns of History

IT IS THIS AGE-OLD drama, then, that has laid the groundwork for anyone who has ever submitted to martyrdom for the sake of Christ—whether that involves the actual death of the physical body or merely the psychological death of our earthly hopes and dreams. As Jesus said, "I tell you truthfully that whoever seeks to saves his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will live forever."[158] Therefore, whether actual or psychological, the death and rebirth of the self is the drama to which the call of Christ beckons His saints—one that brings us full circle in our study of biblical typology.

In doing so, we are driven to the inevitable question: What, exactly, is the point of all this so-called "typological" evidence? Simply put, because God understands how stubborn and skeptical we humans are as a species, He has deigned to communicate the vastness of His truth by way of the patterns of history, which, by their very nature, are hidden in plain sight. In other words, these patterns through time are uniquely designed to be recognized by some but not by others. In this way, the truth of God conveyed by these patterns exists like so much gold lying

158 *Matthew* 16:25; *Luke* 9:24

about in a treasure chest, but which is only open to the virtuous who will use this wisdom to find their way home, while remaining inaccessible to the unscrupulous who would squander such riches on their own selfish purposes.

Therefore, in terms of our present study on shadow and substance, we are hopefully better able to appreciate the "predicament of God," if you will, so that in this instance of Joseph and Benjamin, we can see the persecution the disciples of Jesus endured was not an unfortunate aberration in the plan of God, as it has so often been portrayed. It was, in fact, a necessary cog in the wheel of the ultimate—dare I say—evolution of the redemption of mankind.

Notice, though, I did *not* say the evolution of *mankind*. In using the word *evolution*, I am not referring to a biological process but to a historical one, which we—limited as we are by our human frame of reference—have only come to grips with as the centuries roll on and our understanding of the divine roadmap matures. What I am speaking of here is the evolution of the *redemption* of mankind, in that the salvation of the world was never something that was going to take place overnight, would never happen without the requisite sacrifices that such a miraculous redemption demanded. By necessity, it has been nothing short of an agonizingly slow procedure, much akin to that of the alleged process of biological evolution.

Mind you, however, I am not talking about the godless sort of evolution that seeks to eliminate the role of divine intervention from human history. What I am talking about is a God-ordained process of historical evolution—one that, as we have seen, necessitates the role of numerous messianic figures who lead each generation of the faithful to the next level of awareness of God's plan for humanity, which ticks away like some great celestial clock, with its persistent, methodical unfolding of time.

To reiterate: When God revealed to Adam that He would rescue him and his righteous descendants, He said it would take place in *five and a half* "days." Naturally, Adam did not understand until it was explained to him that it would not occur after just five and a half days as they were perceived in human terms. These *five and a half* "days" represented days from God's perspective, in which a day for Him constituted a thousand

years from humanity's view. That is to say, the redemption that God spoke of would occur upon the completion of a period that encompassed 5,500 years. And not only did Adam misunderstand the actual time frame that was involved in this salvation, but he was also just as ignorant about its progressive nature. From God's point of view, this process of rescuing us from the clutches of death, Hell, and the grave has taken just a few days to fulfill, but from our perspective, it has required many long and excruciating centuries for this rescue effort to unfold.

So for us, this protracted process—where we are literally spoon-fed a gradual knowledge of God's redemptive plan—requires our understanding of the types of Christ in each succeeding generation. Moreover, because of the incremental nature of this awareness, it is entirely incumbent upon us to have a new revelation for each and every wave of mankind, much in the same way a traveler requires a series of milestones along the roadside so that he may complete his journey without getting lost. In other words, without a clear understanding of who—and what—God is calling us to pay attention to in our journey of discovery, which is leading us back to Paradise, we are like sheep without a shepherd, in need of the sort of guidance that only the Lord of the Sheep can provide.

This is why, when Jesus asked His disciples Who they thought He was, they were actually expressing an awareness—however limited—of this age-old dilemma concerning the gradual dispensation of God's revelation. In the disciples' responses were telling clues to anyone who has taken the time to understand that their various answers were not merely random guesses along the way to solving some sort of cosmic whodunit. So Jesus asked His disciples: "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" And they replied: "Some say John the Baptist. Others say Elijah. And still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."[159]

In light of our present study, which demonstrates the extent to which both the apocryphal and canonical records converge in this exegetical tool of shadow and substance, one can better understand the disciples' view of this guiding principle. To a man, the disciples had all been born and bred into Hebraic messianic theology, and as such, they were trained to expect not just anyone who came along talking about God. They were seeking

159 *Matthew* 16:13-14

Someone Who conformed to a timeless tradition of prophetic utterances—a specific Man Whose birth and appearance among men had been precisely predicted.

Above all, they were seeking a Man Who fit a particular mold in terms of the heroes of faith who had all foreshadowed the coming of this Promised One, that is, the Son of Man spoken of so prominently in the books penned by Enoch. So when Jesus continually referred to Himself as the Son of Man, He was unreservedly confirming this tradition of messianic figures who in succeeding generations had prefigured one another until His very day, and this was the hidden meaning behind the disciples' apparently random answers, which to the untrained reader might seem like so many guesses. But to those in the know, their answers actually revealed the extent to which this messianic view of world history had been digested by the people of Israel in that day and age. And when the disciples replied that the people thought Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead, or instead a reincarnation of Elijah, Jeremiah, or some other messianic figure in their pantheon of heroes, they were actually testifying to something that only makes sense in light of our study of typology.

This is especially evident when Jesus Himself attested to this phenomenon to which His disciples obviously subscribed. Matthew described the scene where Jesus was speaking about John the Baptist. He asked the crowd what they had expected to see and hear when they came out to the desert to find John. "A prophet?" asked the Lord. "Yes, of course, and more than a prophet, I tell you. In fact, this is the one of whom it was written: I'll send My messenger ahead of You, who will prepare the way before You. And if you're willing to accept it, he is Elijah who was to come."[160]

Once again, Jesus in His own unique way was demonstrating the validity of typology as it is portrayed throughout *The Bible*. According to Him, God has always been in the business of foreshadowing the events of His salvation throughout the ages. So when Jesus spoke of John the Baptist as being the one of whom it was written, He was actually quoting from *The Book of Malachi*, the last book of *The Old Testament*. In it, Malachi was expressing the lament of God at the perpetual infidelity of His

160 *Matthew* 11:7-14

chosen people. Eventually growing weary of their unjustified complaints, the Lord had no choice except to turn away from them; but, in a moment of divine inspiration, Malachi prophesied a different fate for God's people:

> "See, I'll send My messenger who will prepare the way before Me. Then suddenly the Lord you're seeking will come to His Temple; the Messenger of the Covenant, Whom you desire, will come," says the Lord Almighty.
>
> But who can endure the day of His coming? Who can stand when He appears? For He'll be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He'll sit as a refiner of silver. He'll purify the Levites like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring righteous offerings to Him, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years.[161]

So what can one make of all this in light of our new understanding of typology? The first thing to notice is how Jesus locks into the portion of Scripture that pertains to His coming to the Temple as the Messiah Who has the way prepared for him by Elijah, whom He clearly saw as typifying John the Baptist. The next thing one cannot help but notice is that Jesus did not continue beyond the point that represented His First Coming. "Then suddenly the Lord you're seeking will come to His Temple; the Messenger of the Covenant, Whom you desire, will come," says the Lord Almighty.[162] Beyond that point of the mission of Messiah, He did not relate, because hidden in the plan of God—the mystery so difficult for the disciples to grasp—was that there were two distinct phases that comprised the coming of the Deliverer and not just one, as had always been believed by the people of Israel.

The same thing happened when Jesus read aloud from *The Book of Isaiah* in the Temple concerning the acceptable year of the Lord—a time that involved the healing, deliverance, and liberty of God's people. Closing the book, He stopped midsentence at the very point that segued to the day of God's ven-

161 *Malachi* 3:1-4
162 Ibid. 3:1

geance.[163] Similarly, Jesus at that moment in history spoke only of "the Messenger of the Covenant, the One Whom you desire, Who will come." But He did not continue with the next part of the text in *Malachi* that spoke of the future phase of His coming in which His life would no longer function as a ransom for sin but as the refiner's fire.

Therefore, in both the quoting of the portion of Scripture that pertained to His present situation and the omitting of the part He chose to avoid, there was a clear and telling message, which in the context of shadow and substance reveals a great deal about the mind of Jesus. The most obvious thing is that, in light of the challenges facing Him in communicating God's unfolding plan, Jesus focused on the portions of Scripture that illuminated the most misunderstood aspect of salvation, that is, the nature of His First Coming as the Kinsman Redeemer Who would give His life as a ransom. In order to do this, Jesus made it a point to echo what He found in *The Old Testament* that spoke of this phase of His work, while avoiding what did not.

This is why Jesus sought to highlight the fact that in the person of John the Baptist, they were witnessing the very messenger of God who had been prophesied to prepare the way for the Christ Who was to come. By referring to *Malachi*, Jesus was impressing upon them the lengths to which God had undergone to first raise up Elijah so that they could more readily accept the genuineness of John's role in the redemptive scheme of things. In doing this, God was revealing an enduring truth not only to them but also to an onlooking world. The Lord of the Harvest has forever been in the business of confirming His word by means of this process of shadow and substance—a fact which, as we have seen thus far, is clearly borne out in both the canonical and apocryphal records.[164]

In light of this truth, an understanding of the history of mankind can ultimately be divided into two camps. One view states that history is a series of random actions that results in an endless array of open-ended and meaningless outcomes. The other view states that, however random the actions of humanity appear, there is an underlying principle that is unifying the events of historical time, particularly as they pertain to the so-

163 *Luke* 4:16-22

164 See Act Three: The Themes—*A Man of Substance*

called "people of God." According to this latter view, specific events in the past foreshadow future events in such a way that the past, the present, and the future are all intertwined so that one day they will ultimately confirm the controlling influence of the God of the Universe.

As a result, certain historical facts can, and should be, re-evaluated in terms of this unique principle of shadow and substance. When we might be tempted to view the disciples of Jesus as the most miserable of men because they were savagely persecuted and martyred for their testimony concerning the risen Christ, we might instead marvel at God's mastery over every stream of time and space. Rather than seeing the martyrdom of the Galilean disciples as a jagged edge in an otherwise perfect plan, one might look at these events in the context of God's foreshadowing them by way of Benjamin's ordeal at the hands of his jealous brothers and thereby gain a new appreciation. If one is able to grasp this connection, which clearly reveals God's hidden hand down through the corridors of history, then it might finally impart to us today that there is nothing He does not anticipate in the lives of those who recognize Jesus as their long-lost brother. And though we may be called to endure our own bewildering trials and tribulations because of this same recognition, we can rest assured that—like Benjamin and his "twelve sons" before us—the Lord of Resurrection, the Lord of Life, will always be there to see us through, just as He did for them, to the very end ... and beyond.

The Stage is Set

Anchor of Faith

BEFORE WE PROCEED to *The Tales* presented in this volume, I would like to take one last opportunity to review the scenario that we have established so far. When comparing the so-called "apocryphal" texts with those of the canonical books of *The Bible*, it is abundantly clear that they are deserving of our attention and admiration. First and foremost, they are "worth their weight in gold," as it were, because of the way in which they consistently elucidate the more enigmatic portions of the Canon. Some of the greatest mysteries that have haunted humanity throughout the ages are thrown into an entirely new light when one simply takes the time to consider the implications of the apocryphal record. How did Noah get all those animals into the Ark? Why did he pronounce such a devastating curse on his grandson, Canaan, just because Ham, his father, found him lying in his tent, naked and passed out? And why would Esau, who was described as a cunning, greedy man, so casually sell away a birthright that by all accounts would have brought him untold riches and power? The answer, if the apocryphal record is to be believed, lies in the mystical power of the sheepskin garment that God provided for Adam, which was unmistakably a type of the covering that would one day be provided by none other than the Lamb of God, Jesus, Who was slain before the foundations of the world were laid.

The apocryphal literature also demonstrated its supreme importance when it revealed its ability to provide a clearer picture in terms of God's salvation of Adam by way of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When God promised to rescue Adam and his descendants after The Great Five and a Half Days of prophetic time, He laid the groundwork for this rescue effort by utilizing Abraham and his son. Not only was Isaac a willing participant in volunteering himself as a burnt offering to the Lord, but as a type of God's Son in every dimension he—quite unlike *The Book of Genesis* portrays him—was a grown man, completely aware of what his father was doing when he was led to Mount

Moriah. Most importantly, as a result of their audacious act of obedience, Abraham and Isaac uniquely foreshadowed the way in which the ultimate salvation of mankind would someday be carried out on Calvary.

Finally, in verifying how a study of God's usage of typology provides an anchor of faith, it was again demonstrated that the apocryphal record can be counted on. When biblical historians seek to exemplify God's preponderance for using types in *The Old Testament* to foreshadow the life of Jesus, they consistently turn to Joseph—the dreamer so despised by his brothers. In the life of Joseph, it is said, one can find, more than anyone else in Scripture, a type of Christ Who was to come. The only problem is: There are so many elements in the life of Jesus that are missing from the canonical record of Joseph's life that this prophetic correspondence between the two becomes very difficult—if not impossible—to accept. However, many of the important elements that are missing from the received texts can be found in the apocryphal literature when one simply takes the time to examine it.

For example, according to *Genesis*, there was no distinction in the sons of Jacob's hatred of Joseph. All his brothers, it states, conspired to slay him in order to nullify the fulfillment of his dreams.[165] Therefore, in order for the life of Joseph to represent a genuine type of Christ—as biblical scholars purport—then all the Children of Israel, as they came to occupy Palestine in the time of Jesus, would also be expected to hate and reject the Nazarene as well. But this is not what history has recorded, because a remnant of Israelites certainly did believe, receive, and love Him. Why is that important? It is important because it just so happens that the Galileans at the time of Christ were actually descendants of none other than Benjamin, and when *Jasher* reveals that Benjamin never resented Joseph and that he recognized him before any of the other brothers, one comes face to face with exactly the kind on correlation one might expect to find in the way of typology. In this prophetic correspondence between Benjamin and the Galilean disciples, we have yet another example of the apocryphal literature's ability to undergird this remarkable aspect of the divinely-appointed dramas involving typology.

165 *Genesis* 37:18-19

A Universal Language

IN ALL THESE REMARKABLE ways, the apocryphal literature was found to be a valuable ally in the war against skepticism and doubt. This eventually leads one, then, to ask the next series of inevitable questions: Why, exactly, is the God of *The Bible* so interested in typology, in shadow and substance? What is the point of all this melodramatic subterfuge, anyway? Is there no easier way to get His message across? The answer, I am convinced, is quite an obvious one. But just as important as it is to answer questions like these, it is even more important to provide an answer that lends itself to solving the greater mystery of how we are to confirm God's control and faithfulness in the context of the five *sacred* things. As you will recall, we have thus far established a connection between two of the five things, that is, between The Ark of the Covenant and *The Septuagint Bible*, in that The Ark's dimensions correspond to the *Septuagint's* chronology, and together with the prophecy of The Great Five and a Half Days, we see a clear-cur connection that binds them together. But en route to connecting the other three of the five things in question, we must first understand the underlying issue that adequately explains why God is so involved in communicating His message of salvation by way of all this so-called "melodramatic subterfuge." And in providing such an answer, it is my earnest hope to provide the hidden connection between the five *sacred* things in such a way that there can be no other way to "see" them ever again. However, before I simply blurt this answer out, let me first take a moment to outline what must surely precede this answer. That is to say, before one can entertain a possible answer to such questions, one must first understand the underlying problem that the answer is intended to address.

To begin with, the initial hurdle one is confronted with has everything to do with the nature of communication. By that I mean that it is a problem that rests squarely on the shoulders of the fact that we are neither God-like, nor are we capable of communicating in a God-like manner. As a result, we, as a species, are devoid of the necessary tools to communicate with a God-like being. To which one might reasonably respond: Of course, that is a given; so what is your point? My point is this. If we lack

the ability to communicate with God, as we normally communicate with one another, then how might God choose to communicate with us? He is, after all, the One Who first conceived of this thing we understand as language, is He not? Certainly He does not lack the ability to communicate. Therefore, if anyone has a problem with this process of communication between God and humanity, I would have to assume that the problem lies with us.

From an awareness of this ironic nature of communication, which affects not only mankind's relationship with God but also with itself, one is confronted with the oldest complaint ever introduced into a conversation that ponders whether or not *The Bible* can be trusted as a valid source of truth. Naturally, this complaint is argued all the more passionately by those who proudly embrace their skepticism in the face of anything that even remotely postulates the communicative power of a higher being such as God. Their arguments generally run as follows: How can anyone believe in the divine origin of a book that was written by so many different people, living in different times and places, and speaking different languages? Everyone is familiar with the infamous parlor game where a line of people attempt to convey a message introduced at one end of the line and then passed on from person to person until eventually it comes out completely different on the other end. Is not this exactly what has happened with the countless regurgitations of *The Bible*?

To which I would respond: Yes, madam, or, yes, sir. I completely understand your dilemma. I would never think to argue with you on such a point. On this one thing we can all agree. This is certainly the true nature of the problem we are facing when it comes to depending on a compendium of books that have clearly been translated via a plenitude of language frames. Only a fool would try to dismiss such a valid criticism; a fool, or worse still, a simpleton—neither of which I am sure God needs to affirm His ability to communicate with His own creation. Therefore, any attempt to unravel such a mystery without addressing such an obvious objection would constitute a complete failure on the part of anyone who was endeavoring to validate the truth of *The Bible*.

How sad, then, that so many sincere people, wrestling with

these same issues, have been forced to endure the same old stale clichés, like "You just gotta believe, brother!" Not to mention, "There are just some things in life that require blind faith!" And worst of all, "Blessed are those who believe without seeing." What a tragedy that such bold pronouncements constitute the kind of faith that we are typically being told the Scriptures are calling the true believer to embrace, yet, ironically, nowhere in *The Bible* does God demand that someone believe simply for the sake of believing. And before anyone tries to write me off as being anti-biblical, let me first explain what I mean by that.

The initial thing that should be addressed is that neither of the first two statements even appear in *The Bible*, although over the course of time they have insinuated themselves by way of the traditions of mankind, just as the phrase "God helps those who help themselves" has somehow passed from being something that was quoted by Benjamin Franklin to it having been uttered by the Lord Himself. But trust me when I tell you: Nowhere are these words to be found in Scripture. However, a variation of the last of these admonitions, "Blessed are those who believe without seeing," can be found there; the problem is, though, it is almost always quoted out of context and consequently becomes the basis for all sorts of mischief that might otherwise be avoided if only one is willing to examine the actual text as it is written in *The Bible*.

There is a critically important maxim in regard to interpreting such statements of truth, not only those contained in Scripture but all truth in general, and that is: "Text without context is error." In other words, even genuine truth, when it is lifted out of its proper context, no longer conveys the original truth it once contained but is now, in point of fact, a clear distortion of said truth and is, instead, error. Such a maxim would apply in the following manner. When anyone contemplating the question of God's faithfulness is challenged by the preceding admonitions calling for "blind faith," the first thing they should do is ask: What is the specific setting in which such a statement was made? And in doing so, one might finally penetrate the veil of disinformation that centuries of misapplication have engendered. Take for example, then, this classic misconception of *The Bible*: "Blessed are those who believe without seeing." As it stands, all by itself, it constitutes nothing less than an outright

indictment upon anyone who would dare question the veracity of Scripture as it is presented from any number of pulpits; and as such, it stands as a nearly impenetrable shield against any objection offered in opposition to some pet theory of biblical analysis that is being espoused in the name of almighty truth, no matter how spurious that theory might sound to thinking, rational human beings. So it has been; so it ever shall be, amen. But, wait, not so fast.

Fortunately, for the sake of all those with the courage to investigate such matters, there is a sure-fire method for bringing down such a perennial house of cards; and it proceeds as follows. When trying to decipher the genuine truth of any given biblical pronouncement, ask yourself three simple yet revealing questions: Who said it? To whom was it said? And in what situation was it said? In this particular case, Jesus said it, the person He said it to was His disciple, Thomas, and the situation in which He said it was that time right after Christ's resurrection when He was revealing Himself to His disciples, each in their own turn, with Thomas, according to *The Gospel of John*, being the last. It was in this context, then—after Thomas had infamously refused to believe that Christ had risen from the dead until he could touch where the nails had been, and put his hands into His side—that Jesus said to him: "Because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen Me and yet have believed."[166]

So, now that we have properly set the stage, as it were, ask yourself again: How is the admonition that "you just gotta believe without seeing" altered by drawing out its context in this way? Seen against the backdrop of this full-orbed scene, several questions instantly spring to mind. Is Jesus saying this to someone who did not have the benefit of being one of His twelve disciples? Are we to dismiss the fact that Thomas had walked and talked with Jesus for three and a half years? And finally, are we to assume that Thomas witnessed none of the miracles that He had performed in all that time? Of course not. So, far from admonishing someone to believe in Him without having had a personal awareness of His faithfulness, what we are presented with, instead, is a scene in which Jesus is addressing someone whose belief was entirely predicated on this direct connection

166 *John* 20:24

with Him in terms of everything that Thomas had seen up to that point in time. In other words, the admonition to believe without seeing, which is generally aimed at the so-called "unbeliever," when examined in its proper context, it is actually an admonition to all the doubting Thomases of this world to never forget "in the dark" what you previously saw "in the light." It is not so much an admonition to believe without seeing, then, as it is a call to embrace all the more what you already know to be true, even in the darkest of times when one's confidence in the truth inevitably wanes, just as it had in those dark days immediately following Christ's death.

And as if to make this point perfectly clear, the last verse of John's Gospel provides us with one last piece of this contextual puzzle, when it states, "Jesus performed many other signs that were not recorded in this book, but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His Name."[167] So, if Jesus is only impressed by those individuals who "believe without seeing," to the apparent exclusion of all others, then why would John even bother to make such a statement? And if God expects people to "believe" without the benefit of their first being made aware of His faithfulness, then what is the point of providing mankind with a written record of that faithfulness—you know, that thing we all know and love called *The Bible*? How odd that such a classic misconception as the necessity of "blind faith," which is itself blindly held forth as the supreme example of God's call, falls apart so easily when one simply takes the time to investigate its original context.

One's belief in the Lord, then, as it is found throughout Scripture, is always predicated upon a person's awareness of His control and faithfulness, which, through the sheer weight of it being adequately communicated, engenders a faith in the God of *The Bible*. Faith, as it is biblically defined, comes from a Greek word, *pisteuo*, which being translated means "to trust," as in, to trust someone or something in a tangible way, as one trusts a staff or cane by leaning on it. No one blindly leans on a non-existent staff or cane. Understood this way, one is better able to see that "blind faith" in God is an absurd myth never once found in *The Bible*. Moreover, I defy anyone to prove me

167 *John* 20:30

wrong—assuming, of course, that they are willing to provide the context for such a claim. As just demonstrated, without slicing and dicing Scripture into random bits, one simply cannot accomplish such a feat.

When *The Book of Hebrews* speaks of Abraham believing in God as One Who is invisible, advocates of "blind faith" are quick to point to this verse as proof of their absurd notion. The only problem with this logic is it completely avoids the fact that Abraham repeatedly experienced God's ability to rescue him. When Nimrod threw him into his fiery furnace, he walked around inside it for three days, much to everyone's amazement, without even being singed.[168] But wait. One might argue: That story is nowhere in the canonical record. How do you expect anyone to believe in something like that? Well, it just so happens that an event just like it is recorded in the third chapter of *The Book of Daniel*, when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego miraculously survived their own harrowing ordeal of being thrown into Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace after they had refused to bow down to his image of gold. If I am not mistaken, these two events stand together as yet another example of the kind of connectivity of which I am attempting to convey. In fact, this kind of parallelism, which is found throughout Scripture—both canonical and apocryphal—will comprise a portion of the argument that I will be attempting to formulate here. More will be said about that later.

In the meantime, I mention this here in the context of refuting the idiotic notion of "blind faith" as opposed to the kind exhibited by the heroes of faith who, like Abraham, were led through a series of increasingly difficult challenges, each of which elicited "real faith" in a God Who demonstrated His faithfulness by repeatedly rescuing them. Just as we love the Lord because He first loved us;[169] likewise, we have faith in Him because He first was faithful to us. That is to say, the only kind of faith that *The Bible* is describing is one that occurs as a reaction to God's faithfulness to His promises, whereas anything else merely perverts the truth of a biblically-oriented faith—a perversion that leads someone to either reject the necessity of faith in God, or, worse still, embrace the fallacy of blind faith,

168 *Jasher* 12:22-38
169 *First John* 4:19

both of which lead to a needlessly tragic end.

Having defined the true nature of faith, parenthetically, let us return to where we left off. Moments ago, we were contemplating the yawning chasm between the infinite mind of the Creator and the finite mind of mankind, and with it the question of how we, in the twenty-first century, are to validate the truth of Scripture if the only evidence left to us consists of books written long ago and communicated down to the present day via an array of translations? Admittedly, when one addresses the dilemma in these terms, our problem certainly does appear hopeless, does it not? Yet this is exactly the series of obstacles that the biblical record as a whole is claiming to surmount. But how? Could it be that there is actually a key to unlocking the mysteries of *The Bible* as so many throughout the ages have suggested? And if there really is a key of interpretation, then why has mankind been unable so far to establish some kind of consensus with this process?

Strangely enough, I believe, the answer to such a conundrum is really quite simple, if by the word simple one inserts the word *non-mystical*, because, contrary to popular opinion, finding the answer does not involve delving into the murky realm of *Bible* codes but rather into the all-too-human domain of the cinema. For in the cinema, one is presented with a very specific language—a language not comprised of words but a dialectic of visual imagery, that is to say, a series of images made more meaningful via their sequential arrangement. In the more than one hundred years of its existence, this international art form has managed to accomplish what was best described by American film director D.W. Griffith. "We've gone beyond Babel, beyond words. We've found a universal language."[170] As a result, this language of the cinema—composed entirely of images, of symbols, of meanings—is uniquely capable of imparting a message that transcends any known language barrier. Moreover, it is this simple usage of symbolism to convey meaning—as opposed to a more arcane approach—that most closely resembles the way in which *The Bible* manages to articulate its deepest truths.

Consider this: Prior to the industrial revolution of the late

170 *Screening Out the Past: The Birth of Mass Culture and the Motion Picture Industry*, Lary May, p. 60

eighteenth century, the world remained compartmentalized—geographically, culturally, ideologically. As a result of industrialization, there came an explosion in mass transportation technology in the form of steam locomotion, which within a few short decades laid the foundation for everything that followed. With electrification came the telegraph, the telephone, the phonograph, the automobile, the cinema, the radio, and the airplane, which physically connected the world in a manner previously unimaginable. But, while all these inventions abolished the barriers between physical spaces, none of them could provide the much-needed means to eliminate the psychological barriers that remained. Consequently, a world without geographic barriers has only managed to create an environment where previously disparate regions of the globe began to commingle in unanticipated ways. Rather than unite the world, the abolition of borders has done far more harm than good, as evidenced by two world wars, followed by decades of regional war ever after.

Amidst all this technologically-induced strife, only one invention has succeeded in rising above the mayhem of clashing titans, of south rising against north, of east rising against west. Only the cinema has provided humanity with the potential to bridge the psychological gap that was laid bare in the wake of the tearing asunder of physical barriers, and only masters of the cinema have learned over the course of time to perfect an art form that has managed to transcend all cultural and ideological boundaries, proving that the peoples of the world are not so different after all. North, south, east, west: When seen through the eyes of the universal language of the cinema, these so-called "pockets of ideology" bear a striking, if not haunting, similarity to one another.

It is this unique language of imagery, symbolism, and meaning, then, that, I am convinced, is the key to understanding God's message in *The Bible*; not the vague, surreptitious sort that only a computer genius can hope to decipher, but one that is laid bare for all to see on pages of black and white. This is why, when pioneers of the cinema sought to distance their product from their childish reputation as mere nickelodeons, they did so by cleverly embedding the universal message inspired by Holy Writ. By virtue of this infusion, the world's first patently mod-

ern art form soon took on an unprecedented maturity. Inspired by the timeless tapestry of biblical history, prescient producers breathed new life into their creations: Heroes and heroines alike strove against overwhelming odds, brother pitted jealous will against brother, merciless overlords sought to enslave the free, and amidst it all, the Divine One dipped His benevolent hand into the well of human misery. In theaters around the globe, themes of tragedy and hope, of crime and punishment, of ruin and rebirth, resonated deeply, from city to city, state to state, and country to country.

Furthermore, in a truly ironic fashion that I am sure no one has yet to fully appreciate in terms of its prophetic significance, for its first thirty years of existence the cinema was forged into being without uttering a single, spoken word. The silver screen was above all a silent one. To be sure, the written word was periodically inserted, but primarily it was an art form that conveyed its story entirely by way of a series of visual images. Concluded British film critic David Robinson: "This was the most truly international era in which was created a new art of great subtlety and sophistication."[171] Through all manner of metaphor, allegory, and simile, the cinema perfectly conveyed its poetic vision in a way that could be understood in every corner of the globe without an ounce of its intended message ever being lost to mistranslation.

This to me is what God—in His preponderance for using types and shadows—had in mind when He set out to communicate His truth to mankind. He speaks through dramas that transcend interpretation, that is to say, through universally recognizable symbols of dramatic significance that supersede the brute limitations of the intellect and speak directly to the heart and soul of humanity. This is why *The Bible* repeatedly focuses on the enduring elements that constitute the human condition in all its ignominious glory—of courage and cowardice, of sacrifice and greed, of faith and doubt, of honesty and deceit, of revenge and mercy, of loyalty and betrayal, of love and hate. This is why the truths of Scripture are so often couched in double and triple parallels of events that span many generations, as when the likes of Isaac, Joseph, Moses, and Jonah all foreshad-

171 *Seventy Years at the Movies: From Silent Films to Today's Screen Hits*, David Robinson (Consulting Editor), p. 7

ow the life of Jesus.

In this way, the Lord demonstrates His acute awareness that we, as members of a fallen race, require this process of foreshadow and payoff to apprehend the true nature of the Divine, much like an audience sitting in a darkened theater requires the necessary clues to penetrate the mystery that is being played out on the screen before it. And though we can only gaze in rapt anticipation upon these iconic dramas, as those who "look through a glass, darkly," we are still able to grasp the truth conveyed in these scattered moments through time, and perceive in them a remarkable synergy that no mere mortal could have ever contrived.

Milestones of the Millennia

TO ILLUSTRATE THIS point, we will now take some time to examine one of the most controversial—and therefore most important—concepts to be found in *The Bible*, and due to the sweeping implications of this particular subject, it is also the one that most people have the greatest difficulty with, that of the resurrection of the dead. For example, just try to point out that of all the so-called "good and wise" men who have ever lived and died throughout the ages—men like Jesus, Buddha, Confucius, and Mohammed—only one among them ever predicted that three days after His death He would rise from the grave.

As a matter of course, everyone is perfectly willing to admit that Jesus was a good and wise man, considering all the wonderful things He said and did, but that He actually rose from the dead, that is where they draw the line. Never mind that if Jesus did not rise from the grave, He could not be called good and wise, because anybody who claimed that he would rise from the dead was either a liar, in that he expected people to believe something he knew he was incapable of doing, or crazy, in that he actually believed the impossible about himself. Either way, such a man could never be deemed good and wise, and would therefore have to be removed from this pantheon of good and wise men.

How, then, does one go about determining the possibility of such an event? Well, one might argue, posterity has received

the testimony of the Galilean disciples, not to mention upwards of five hundred additional eyewitnesses who also testified to the resurrection of Jesus.[172] But many would insist that such antiquated reports, dating back more than two thousand years, constitute evidence far too tenuous from which to deliver such an important verdict. And if such claims of Jesus' resurrection were actually admitted as testimony, one could still never rule out the possibility that once things had failed to pan out as predicted these so-called "eyewitnesses" simply lied in an attempt to save face. Certainly even the most ardent believer must consider such likelihoods, if they are willing to be honest with themselves. So how can the sincere investigator of such mysteries ever hope to penetrate so many layers of historical uncertainty?

Fortunately for us, our investigation does have the one thing that we have presently been learning about, insofar as the Lord of Time has established His own unique way of undergirding our pathetically human approach to such dilemmas. There are, in essence, still the dramas that transcend interpretation. What does that mean in terms of whether or not Jesus might have risen from the grave? It means that when I see someone literally gag on the sheer improbability that a man might actually have raised from the dead, I am perfectly happy to begin addressing the problem with the same systematic approach that I believe God has provided throughout the entire *Bible*. First and foremost, I will focus on the way in which the theme of the resurrection of the dead permeates Scripture from beginning to end. In other words, in the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, we are by no means being confronted with an isolated incident, an event that illogically appears from out of nowhere, an apparent aberration that has no historical antecedent. Let me demonstrate what I mean by that.

It has been said that *The Bible* is above all a book of miracles, and certainly there is no greater miracle depicted within its pages than that of the resurrection of the dead. In *The Old Testament*, Elijah raised the son of a widow.[173] After him, Elisha was involved in two resurrections: The first time occurred

172 *First Corinthians* 15:3-8
173 *First Kings* 17:17-24

when he raised the Shunemite's son;[174] the second time, when a corpse was placed in Elisha's sepulcher and came back to life after just touching the bones of Elisha.[175] In *The New Testament*, Jesus famously raised Lazarus, among others;[176] God raised Jesus;[177] and Peter raised Tabitha.[178]

Yet oddly enough, though all these passages record the resurrection of various individuals, their occurrence throughout Scripture still seems so random somehow. That is to say, this person resurrected over here, and that one resurrected over there, and then, oh, yeah, Jesus resurrected, too. But never before—in my experience, at least—have any of the "lesser resurrections," if you will, ever been examined in the context of the greater resurrection of Jesus. Never before have I been told that the proof of Christ's resurrection could be bolstered by virtue of the knowledge that before He rose from the grave, others rose as a God-ordained "shadow of things to come." That is until now; because it is my earnest hope that with the next cataloging of risen ones, it might finally provide this added dimension in determining whether or not the resurrection of Christ should be seen as merely an isolated, illogical, aberrational event.

To properly do this, we will again find ourselves turning to the apocryphal record, because, as has already been demonstrated, when looking only to the narratives found in the Biblical Canon, one is left with the aforementioned haphazard view of the resurrection of the dead. But when one takes the time to balance our view of Scripture, which involves including information from the apocryphal record, one is suddenly provided with a much more complete picture of what the God of *The Bible* clearly intends as His overall intention for humanity.

Case in point is mankind's first experience with the concept of the resurrection of the dead, which for some strange reason was completely skipped over in *Genesis*. Nevertheless, while this critical detail was omitted from the canonical book, this omission does not occur in the apocryphal record. In fact, it seems as if it is the most important theme of *The First Book of*

174 *Second Kings* 4:20-37
175 Ibid. 13:21
176 *John* 11:43-44
177 *Acts* 2:24, 32; 3:15, 26; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 33, 34, 37
178 Ibid. 9:36-41

Adam and Eve. Of course, this does not seem so hard to believe when one simply puts "flesh and blood," as it were, on that first couple who alone knew what it meant to fall from grace. What else would Adam and Eve be more obsessed with than the restoration of the life-force they had been deprived of the moment they ate from the Tree of Knowledge? This is never more evident than immediately after they found themselves exiled from the Garden of Eden. They were so heartbroken, their behavior bordered on the suicidal. Like desperate, confused children, Adam and Eve tried to entice God to let them back into the garden, again and again, but far from achieving their earnest desire, they instead suffered the dire consequences of their misguided recklessness, which led to their deaths on numerous occasions. Only through the direct intervention of the pre-incarnate Christ was the couple spared each and every time. Appearing to Adam and Eve by the same name that John, the gospel writer, would later describe Him,[179] the Word of God raised them from death, repeatedly explaining to them that He was restoring their lives so they could fulfill the years God had decreed for them.[180]

The second example of the resurrection of the dead, and the first to be found in the received texts, is one that is expressed in allegorical terms. "And Enoch walked with God, and he was no more because God took him."[181] But because the description in *Genesis* is so sparse, one is again forced to turn to the apocryphal record to better understand how this event typifies resurrection. In *The Secrets of Enoch*, we find that when Enoch was taken up to Heaven, his family had no idea where he was. In their view, Enoch was the ancient equivalent of the modern-day "missing person," having vanished without a trace.[182] Enoch's family—assuming the worst—thought perhaps that a wild beast had carried him away. Then as suddenly as he had disappeared, Enoch was back among them once again, alive and well. So from their view, Enoch's family received him back into their lives as one returning from the great beyond, as though he had been raised from the dead.

179 *John* 1:1-5, 14
180 *First Adam and Eve* 10:1-3; 20:4-8; 68:1-2
181 *Genesis* 5:24
182 *Secrets of Enoch* 38:1-3

Yet another type of the resurrection of the dead occurred in *Jasher*, where we read that Abraham as a young man survived for three days in the fiery furnace into which Nimrod threw him for brashly insulting him to his face.[183] Although this story does not appear in the canonical record, a similar ordeal by fire does appear there. In *The Book of Daniel*, three Hebrew men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, survived a parallel event at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar.[184] In both cases, we can see a striking similarity in symbolism, as together they form a powerful allusion of the three days in Hades that Christ was to endure between the point of His death and subsequent resurrection.

Next, we come to, by far, the most familiar type of the resurrection of the dead to be found in *The Old Testament*, which involves the story of Abraham and Isaac. For all intents and purposes, both men went to Mount Moriah with the firm assumption that there would be a death involved. As it turned out, they were right. To be sure, Isaac was bound and laid upon an altar. To be sure, Abraham was poised, knife at the ready, to slay his beloved son, but instead of Isaac dying, it was a ram that was, in the end, sacrificed in his place—the one that God provided as a type of the Lamb of God slain before the foundations of the world were laid.[185] In this way, Isaac experienced a kind of psychological death and resurrection in a foreshadowing event that would prepare the hearts and minds of humanity for the sacrificial death that Christ would one day undergo in reality and not merely symbolically.

The next well-known type of the resurrection of the dead took place when the brothers of Joseph threw him in a pit, sold him into Egyptian bondage, and told their father Jacob that a wild beast had killed him.[186] Unbeknownst to his brothers, however, Joseph's life took on a new dimension in the land of his servitude. Through a miraculous turn of events, he threw off his chains and ascended to a position of great power as the viceroy of Egypt.[187] Then according to the providence of God, Joseph's family was forced to travel to Egypt because of the terrible fam-

183 *Jasher* 12:1-34
184 *Daniel* 3:13-27
185 *Genesis* 22:6-13
186 Ibid. 37:19-35
187 Ibid. 41:39-43

ine raging in Canaan.[188] And like Enoch being restored to his family, alive and well, Joseph revealing himself to his brothers bears a striking similarity to the moment when the risen Christ would miraculously return from the dead and be received by His astonished disciples.[189] In this way, Joseph's trip from the pit to the throne perfectly parallels the same journey that Jesus was destined to make in which He was cast into the pit of Hades, yet ultimately rose again and ascended to the right hand of the Father.[190]

In regards to this theme of the journey of Christ—one which took Him from the lowest realms of the underworld to the highest point of creation—we come to another example of this recurring drama. This time we have but a slice of a man's life; still it is a very potent slice in terms of its prophetic meaning. The man I am speaking of is Moses. In this case, however, we are not interested in the full-blown deliverer of Israel who boldly raised his staff and parted the Red Sea, or the great lawgiver who strode down from Mount Sinai to defy those who were worshipping the Golden Calf. No, what we will be focusing on this time is the story of Moses as a babe wrapped in the blanket of a Hebrew slave.

The scene is a familiar one. Yet ironically, the reason that this aspect of Moses' life is so familiar is not as one might expect because of what we read in the canonical version of *The Bible*. In fact, anyone who relies on *The Book of Exodus* for this part of the story might otherwise miss out on the fact that this portion of Moses' life bears a striking resemblance to the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. In this, I have to admit, I would have been just as wrong, because when I set out to draw from this well of typological truth concerning the lives of messianic figures of *The Old Testament*, I simply assumed that my memory of it had been derived from *Exodus*. But much to my considerable shock it was not. Before too long, however, I did locate the flaw in my thinking. Eventually, it occurred to me that the actual source for the connection I had in mind between the lives of Moses and Jesus—as it pertains to the slaughter of the Innocents in the reigns

188 *Genesis* 42:1-2

189 Ibid. 45:1-15

190 *Matthew* 26:64; *Mark* 14:62; 16:19; *Luke* 22:69; *Acts* 2:33; 5:31; 7:55; *Romans* 8:34; *Ephesians* 1:20; *Colossians* 3:1; *Hebrews* 1:3; 12:2; *First Peter* 3:22

of Pharaoh and Herod—came not by way of a book written by Moses but a film produced by Hollywood.

The movie I am referring to is the 1956 classic *The Ten Commandments*, starring Charlton Heston and Yul Brynner. Every year, at the same time, this movie is replayed. For Christians, it is Easter; for Jews, it is Passover. For everyone else, the fact that both of these holidays occur at the same time is merely a coincidence. From my point of view, however, one that is constantly seeking out the patterns in history, events like these are never coincidental. To me, they represent milestones of the millennia—sacred signposts of a God Who is continually providing humanity with a clearly marked path in the unfolding drama of the ages. What we are dealing with, then, in both Easter and Passover, is yet another example of parallel events, which together form one of the major linchpins in proving that Jesus of Nazareth is none other than the Lamb of God sacrificed as a propitiation for the sins of the world.

Clearly, it was God's intention to foreshadow this prophetic connection when He instructed Moses to institute the feast of Passover on the eve of the Exodus of Israel from Egypt. There was the nation Israel; there was the Passover lamb; and there was Egypt. In this timeless drama, Israel was a type of all those who would put their trust in God, who "ate the bread of haste, with staff in hand and sandals on their feet," ready to move, though still apparently enslaved to Egypt.[191] The sacrificial lamb was a type of Christ, Who would one day shed His blood, just as Isaac had offered to do on Mount Moriah. Finally, Egypt was a type of sin—that is, the world, the flesh, and the devil—which holds all mankind in its seemingly perpetual vice-like grip. These three elements came together, then, in the Passover feast that Moses instituted, which was nothing less than the nationalization of Abraham's actions on Mount Moriah, when he sacrificed a ram instead of his son, Isaac. Ever after, the priests of Israel continued this tradition throughout the life of the nation, right up until the time that Christ strode upon the stage of world history.

Of all this Jesus was clearly mindful when He chose to go to Jerusalem. Prior to this decision, which He knew would trigger events that would lead to His crucifixion, He had refused

191 *Exodus* 12:11

to make the trip, because, as He put it: "It's not My time to go yet."[192] More to the point, when Jesus finally did decide to go, He did it specifically at Passover time.[193] Even the Jewish authorities who opposed Him understood that it would not be in their best interests to have Him crucified as the Paschal lambs were being slain in the Temple because they were justifiably worried it might lend credence to His claim to be the Lamb of God.[194] Yet crucify Him they did, right on schedule, according to the "set times" of the Lord.

In this, we see another prime example of parallelism in biblical typology. Not only have the many messianic figures represented types of Christ throughout history, but all the blood sacrifices that have ever been carried out down through the ages have also been part of God's plan in foreshadowing the ultimate sacrifice, which is Jesus, the Lamb of God. This prophetic timeline—often referred to by theologians as the scarlet thread of redemption—began when the lion killed those first sheep that provided adequate coverings for Adam and Eve. It continued when Abraham sacrificed the ram on Mount Moriah, through the days of the first Passover feast on the eve of the Exodus, right up to that fateful day when Jesus shed His blood at Calvary.

With all this mind, let us return to the movie *The Ten Commandments*. Prior to this, we have pointed out how events in the life of Moses and Jesus were connected in ways that are similar to Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, David, and Jonah. Now we come to another instance of parallel lives. In this case, though, it is not one that pertains to types of Christ but to types of Anti-Christ. It is well known to biblical historians that both Pharaoh and Herod the Great instigated a slaughter of the Innocents in each of their days. In this diabolical connection, we have another clear example of typological truth—although a decidedly negative version. Before Herod sought to eliminate the birth of the Christ Child, Pharaoh similarly sought to eliminate the child Moses, who was himself a type of Christ. Strangely enough, though, I had always assumed that these two events were linked in the received text, but I soon realized how mis-

192 *John* 7:6-8
193 *Matthew* 26:18-19
194 *Matthew* 26:3-5; *Mark* 14:1-2

taken I had been. Come to find out: The story as I remembered it was only hinted at in *Exodus*; and I do mean hinted. Like so many of the canonical versions, the text is so deficient of detail that in retrospect I am shocked at the extent to which my own memory had embellished what is hardly there in the traditional narrative. Let me demonstrate what I mean.

In the gospel record, we do find an explicit version of the attack on the male babies of Israel—one of the last acts to be instigated by Herod the Great. As the story goes, Herod received news from the Wise Men of the star that purportedly heralded the birth of the long-awaited Christ. In response to this news, the king ordered that all the male Israelite children under two years of age should be killed in order to prevent this legendary Child from ever growing up to replace him.[195] In this regard, the canonical version of *The New Testament* is as explicit as any movie that Hollywood has ever produced on the subject, such as *King of Kings* or *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. However, what I found so surprising was that I thought *The Old Testament* was just as explicit when it came to the events surrounding the birth of Moses.

The story—as I had remembered it—went as follows. Fearful of a prophecy of a Hebrew deliverer who was destined to free his prized slaves, the king of Egypt unleashed a terrible pronouncement: All the male babies born to the Hebrew slaves were to be drowned in the Nile River. By doing this, Pharaoh was convinced he would rid his kingdom of the threat of a potential slave revolt that might be led by this so-called "Hebrew Messiah." In my mind, then, I could clearly see a link between the prophecies of the births of both Moses and Jesus. To me, all this made perfect sense in light of everything I had learned so far about typological consistency. In other words, if Christ really did represent the fulfillment of all prophecy, then one might naturally expect to find examples of births of messianic figures involving prophetic utterances that would foreshadow His eventual birth. Most notably among these, in *The Old Testament*, is Samson, of whom it was said that "he will be a Nazarite from his mother's womb, and will begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."[196] And, in *The New Testament*, there

195 *Matthew* 2:1-18
196 *Judges* 13:2-5

is John the Baptist, whose birth clearly foreshadowed that of his cousin, Jesus, because it was said of John that "he will be great in the sight of the God, and will be filled with the Spirit of the Lord, even from his mother's womb."[197] The surprising thing, however, was when I examined *Exodus* to confirm this correspondence concerning the birth of Moses, I found that this aspect of the story simply was not there. According to it, the Egyptians were only concerned with their inability to control the Hebrew population in their midst, which then led to their plan to rid themselves of the threat by drowning all the male infants.[198] In short, there was not a single word in the received text about the prophecy of a deliverer destined to lead the Hebrews to freedom.

So where had I come upon this idea that the events of Moses' birth were a mirror image of Jesus' birth? If it was not in *Exodus*, then where had it come from? That was when I finally realized that I had gotten the idea not from Scripture but from Hollywood. In reality, the idea had been planted in my mind by the 1956 film *The Ten Commandments*. Thoroughly disappointed, I felt I had no choice but to abandon this train of thought and move on to something else, when suddenly it dawned on me. Maybe I should check the account of Moses' birth in *Jasher*. That was when I discovered that, once again, the apocryphal record had provided me with the necessary cog in the wheel that made my "typological machine" run. There it was in the sixty-seventh chapter: The Pharaoh at the time, just like his father before him in the days of Joseph, had had a nightmare. In his dream, the king saw an old man with weighing scales in his hands. Onto one side of the scales, the man placed all the noblest men of Egypt, while, onto the other side, he placed a kid goat. And much to the amazement of Pharaoh, this single, insignificant goat outweighed all of his best men. When he woke up, the king immediately gathered all of his wise men so that they might interpret such a confusing dream. Then Balaam, the son of Beor, stepped forward—of whom it would later be famously recorded that he had a conversation with his donkey. According to Balaam:

197 *Luke* 1:13-15
198 *Exodus* 1:9-22

> This could only mean one thing, My Pharaoh. Something terrible is going to happen to Egypt someday; and all because a son is going to be born to Israel who will destroy Egypt and everyone who lives there. And afterward, he'll lead the Israelites out of Egypt with a mighty hand. So, if I were you, I'd make sure you do everything you can right now to destroy the hopes and expectations of these people before they ever have a chance to rise up and crush the land of Egypt.[199]

So there it was: The connection I had been seeking. Until now, I had always thought that the parallel between the births of Moses and Jesus had been derived from the received text, but not anymore. To my amazement, I realized it had actually come from one of my favorite movies. Even more amazing, it now seemed more obvious than ever that filmmakers had not only borrowed from the canonical texts in their attempts to make their movies more meaningful, but they had turned to apocryphal literature as well.[200]

Parenthetically, it should be noted that this is not the first time that artists have been known to draw from apocryphal literature to enrich their art. According to Philip Jenkins, professor of history at Baylor University, the same thing happened repeatedly in the case of *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, in which the narrative of Christ's descent into the underworld after His death—referred to as the Harrowing of Hell—provided "rich opportunities for dialog and dramatic interaction."[201] As Jenkins observed:

> The Nicodemus story spread across Christendom. In the visual arts, the Harrowing story was portrayed in thousands of paintings and carvings, windows and wall-paintings, which reached a climax between 1380 and 1520, the years leading up to the Reformation. Major Renaissance artists who treated the theme included Andrea Montegna, about 1470, and the German Albrecht Dürer, about 1510. In the Eastern Church, the

199 *Jasher* 67:11-20

200 See Act Three: The Themes—*A Hero for the Ages*

201 *The Many Faces of Christ: The Thousand-Year Story of the Survival and Influence of the Lost Gospels*, Philip Jenkins, p. 83

> common *ikon* theme of the *Anastasis*, or Resurrection, depicts the Harrowing and the liberation of the righteous dead…
>
> The Harrowing was a central theme of the vernacular literatures that emerged across Europe from the twelfth century onward. It featured in every major language, in plays, sagas, chronicles, pious poems, and bloody epics…
>
> Each country developed its own Harrowing mythology. The story was sung in French verse, and it drew the attention of Europe's greatest medieval poet, Dante Alighieri.[202]

Apart from Dante's *Inferno*, which clearly draws a parallel between the poet's main character, in his own descent into Hell, and that of Nicodemus' Christ character, the story, said Jenkins, "even has a claim to rank as the origin of European drama … given the theatrical character of the *Descensus* itself, with its extensive dialogs in scenes that cry out for dramatization."[203]

So, now that we have demonstrated the extent to which the apocryphal literature exerted its influence upon other works of drama, and having established that, in his birth, Moses was another type of Christ, we can now tie up the loose ends of all the ideas that I introduced several paragraphs ago. I began this train of thought when, in discussing the theme of the journey from death to life, I had compared the plight of Joseph with that of Jesus'. In both of their lives there ran a consistently familiar chord. Both were cast into a pit of apparent hopelessness. By the hand of their own brothers, Joseph had been consigned to a snake-filled pit and Jesus to the pit of Hades itself. Yet because of their absolute faith in God, both were raised from the degradation to which they had been subjected. What is more, the instrument with which their oppressors had intended to destroy them instead became the very tool by which the God of Resurrection and Life brought about their exaltation.

And so it was that a similar destiny was in store for Moses—in his case regarding the events surrounding his birth—because

202 *The Many Faces of Christ: The Thousand-Year Story of the Survival and Influence of the Lost Gospels*, Philip Jenkins, pp. 86-87

203 Ibid. p. 88

no matter how hard Pharaoh tried to nullify the prophecy of the birth of the Hebrews' deliverer, it was his own edict to drown all the male babies that ended up backfiring on him. In a form of poetic justice that no Hollywood writer could have conceived, the Nile River—the same body of water that was used to drown the Hebrew infants—became the vehicle that floated the baby Moses into the court of Pharaoh's daughter. In other words, the Nile River became, for the Hebrews, the most improbable vehicle, which, against all odds, ensured that their hopes and dreams would be resurrected from the very crucible of death with which the Egyptians had intended to destroy them.

Fortunately, the apocryphal literature and Hollywood are not the only places that one finds these typological truths concerning this recurring theme of the resurrection of the dead. In fact, I am pleased to report that another of the most familiar of these types is found in *The New Testament*. Moreover, the expositor of our final lesson concerning this much-misunderstood aspect of biblical typology is none other than Jesus of Nazareth. As it so happens, it concerns the tale of Jonah and the whale. In it, we come face to face with one of the most improbable stories to be found in Scripture—yet paradoxically—one of the most enduring. So, why is it that such a whopper of a fish tale should attach itself so vigorously to the human imagination?

Undoubtedly, it is because Jesus Himself insisted on endorsing the story. Without such a validation, the drama of Jonah, residing in the belly of the whale for three full days before being spit out on the shores of Nineveh, might certainly have been relegated to a lesser status in the annals of fanciful tales. But endorse the story He did. In the Gospels of both Matthew and Luke there is corroborative evidence that Jesus did so without reservation.

> Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the Law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you."
>
> And Jesus answered, "A wicked, adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given to it except for the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah spent three days and nights in the belly of the whale, so the Son of Man will be three days and

> nights in the heart of the Earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment against this generation and condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now someone even greater than Jonah is among you."[204]

In addition, as if to establish a clear precedence for the story, Matthew has Jesus refer to it again when He is reprimanding the Pharisees and Sadducees for their unrelenting demands for celestial signs. "You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky," Jesus said to them, "but you can't interpret the signs of the times. A wicked, adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given to it except for the sign of Jonah."[205]

From this, it is quite evident that, in the mind of Jesus, the story of Jonah was no mere sidebar. Every time the religious authorities of His day demanded a sign to prove His deity, He unflinchingly referred to it. No wonder that this granddaddy of all fish tales has continued to endure to the present day, in spite of the story's apparent implausibility. In short, it seems obvious by the way Jesus compared His hellish descent with Jonah's perilous journey that we are left with but one conclusion. Before one dismisses the outrageous claim that the crucified Jesus had risen from the grave, one would do well to remember the story of one of Christ's greatest forerunners, whose own story of peril and redemption stands as a shining beacon in the face of mankind's most dreaded enemy—typified by the belly of the whale—death. Moreover, as Jesus undoubtedly took courage from the fact that He could seek deliverance from the same God Who had rescued Jonah, we, too, would do well to remember the same thing. As it is written in *The Book of Hebrews*:

> Now faith is the substance of what we hope for, the certainty of what we do not yet see. This is what the ancients were commended for… By faith, Enoch was taken from this life so that he did not experience death; he could not be found because God had taken him away, in that before he was taken, he was commended as one

204 *Matthew* 12:38-41; *Luke* 11:29-32
205 *Matthew* 16:3-4

who pleased God…

By faith, Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead and, figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death…

By faith, Joseph, when his end was near, spoke of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones… By faith, Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God, regarding disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt…

Not only that, but women also received back their dead, raised to life again, while others, who were tortured, refused to be released so that they might gain a better resurrection… All of these, then, were commended for their faith.[206]

Therefore, based on all of these shining examples, it seems fairly certain that this concept of the resurrection of the dead is no mere afterthought in *The Bible*. If anything, it is its most resounding theme—one which found its ultimate expression in the life of Jesus, the Risen One. From it, we have evidence for the assurance of resurrection by way of the lives of Adam, whom God repeatedly raised in order to fulfill his ordained time on Earth; of Enoch, who was miraculously restored to his family after they had given him up for dead; of Abraham, who, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, survived for three anxious days in a fiery furnace; of Isaac, who survived the harrowing ordeal of offering himself as a burnt offering; of Joseph, who rose from the pit of despair to the heights of divinely-ordained power in order to save his family from starvation; of Moses, who, abandoned as a baby to an unknown fate, was floated by the very instrument intended to destroy him into the shelter of a mother's nurturing arms; and of Jonah, who, though hope-

206 *Hebrews* 11:1, 5, 17-19, 22, 24, 26, 35, 39

lessly imprisoned in the belly of the whale, was three days later, according to the "set times" of the Lord, cast forth into the light of a new day.

The Author of the Universe

IN REVIEW, WHAT CAN one surmise from all of this? If it can be summed up concisely, I guess our storyline would run as follows. If God has apparently gone to such great lengths to speak to mankind by way of types and shadows, then He must have done so because He understands that, more than anything else, we are creatures with brains that are uniquely tuned to these tried-and-true storytelling elements. In an attempt to prove such a point, we not only have the biblical texts to offer up as evidence, but we also have a continuing record of many millennia in which humans, as a species, have spent endless amounts of energy in the business of telling stories.

As for the precise origin of storytelling, there is much debate as to how far back one must look to discover history's first example, particularly in respect to its conveyance in written form. This is due primarily to the fact that the modern view simply cannot accept the idea that the ancients were—as *The Bible* clearly implies—recipients of a "written tradition" prior to the so-called "oral tradition." In this way, a strictly humanistic interpretation of world history has won the day in its ability to rewrite an unabashedly biblical one. According to this humanistic view, primitive mankind simply lacked the necessary cognitive skills which were required for such things as writing—a skill that would only later supersede the more "primitive" phase of human development indicated by a "simpler" oral transmission of cultural wisdom.

Unfortunately, because this present analysis on the function of storytelling is a limited one, we have neither the time nor space to delve into the arguments for or against such a view. Suffice it to say, this work embraces a biblical frame of reference in opposition to a humanistic one that assumes that storytelling began with caveman drawings. As such, we view its true origins as having occurred with the production of written works like those attributed to Enoch, the first narrator of *The Bible*. And should anyone ask why there is no evidence for this written

tradition prior to the oral tradition—apart from the straightforward testimony of Enoch's texts themselves—one may simply point out that this "missing chapter" of history was entirely in accordance with the plan of God, in that these earliest examples of storytelling were meant to be lost for a time. Only later, following a period similar to that of the Dark Ages of medieval Europe, would writing give birth to the more traditionally accepted version of storytelling as it has come to be known today.

Needless to say, however, the importance of telling stories as a cultural phenomenon, both past and present, can hardly be overstated. In fact, many historians and anthropologists believe storytelling to be one of the most widely influential factors in the development of civilization, the common denominator that binds our collective humanity. Since time immemorial, stories that define the human race have been handed down from generation to generation. Many are viewed as merely myths, legends, fables, or fairy tales; others are deemed epics, adventures, or morality plays. But in every case, at the heart of the tale that stands the test of time, is a story of what it means to be human—or more specifically—what it means to become "more" human. In other words, at the center of all the stories that have carved out this universal tradition of storytelling is an element of *transformation*.

As the old adage goes: The only constant in the Universe is change; and just as it is with the Universe, so it is with every great story. Transformation, metamorphosis, transcendence, call it what you will. Whether literally or figuratively, characters that speak to the human heart are ones who are striving to become something more than what they started out to be. And in this process of "becoming"—as when a caterpillar morphs into a butterfly, thereby becoming something altogether different—mankind is face to face with God's age-old work of recession and renewal, of extinction and rebirth, of death and resurrection. Old things are passed away; behold, all things have become new.[207] Death is swallowed up in victory,[208] and resurrection—whether literally or figuratively—has provided a brand-new start.

This, then, is the essence of drama and the reason, I believe,

207 *Second Corinthians* 5:17
208 *First Corinthians* 15:54

that God Himself is to be considered the Author of the Universe. After all, did not John, in the opening chapter of his Gospel, state that the Word of God created all things?[209] According to this view, the Godhead spoke the Universe into existence by way of the articulated word. "And God '*said*' let there be light."[210] From this, one might gain some insight into the biblical passages that refer to Jesus as the Author of the Universe. The Apostle Peter called Jesus the "Author of Life."[211] Additionally, Paul referred to Jesus in much the same vein, twice calling Him the "Author of Salvation," and once, the "Author of Faith."[212]

No wonder that all the processes in the known Universe, both natural and supernatural, are undergirded by this same articulated word, which speaks of the irresistible cycle of life and death. According to both biological and spiritual precepts—each according to its own frame of reference—the death of an organism is but a gateway to another form of life, however mystifying that new life form appears from our limited view. In scientific terms, matter is never lost; it is regenerated into a different form. Similarly, in theological terms, spirit is never lost; it, too, is retranslated into a new dimension.

The Wondrous Circle

SO WHAT IS THE point of all the foregoing analytics? The point is: If God is the Author of the Universe, then it should no longer come as a surprise that He determined every aspect of creation would embrace the message of redemption that He uttered to Adam and Eve. In fact, given this understanding of God as Author, it makes perfect sense that He would choose a messianic figure like Enoch to proclaim the first prophecies of the Son of Man Who would one day carry out this mission of saving Adam and his descendants. It would similarly follow that—as critical as the articulation of such a message was—this message of Enoch, and others like him, would have been rejected and subsequently lost for many long ages. And finally, when the time had finally come to initiate a new era of spiritual

209 *John* 1:3
210 *Genesis* 1:1
211 *Acts* 3:15
212 *Hebrews* 2:10; 5:9; 12:2

awakening, it seems only natural that this Author God would do so via this same articulated word, specifically uttered for the sake of the chosen people of His calling.

More to the point, this is why I am convinced that God has chosen to convey His message not in terms that stifle the faith of His people, that is to say, in the trivial details of laws, regulations, and restrictions, which invoke such a burden of guilt and shame that it does nothing but quench the Spirit of Truth. Instead, God, as the Author of the Universe, has chosen to manifest His redemption via the power of the dramas of life and death, of war and peace, of doom and deliverance, as they are portrayed throughout the history of His chosen ones. As it was written by the hand of the Apostle Paul: "Faith comes through the hearing of God's word."[213] And again he wrote: "So I ask you, does God give you His Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the Law or by your believing what you have heard?"[214]

In other words, God's plan has always been to rescue mankind by way of its response to the message He has entrusted to His light-bearers who have woven their artful tales, of the rising and falling of the human spirit, of the rebellion and rebirth of the human heart, of the death and resurrection of the human body. In this way, these inspired tales of wonder and awe have fulfilled their divine purpose in being spread abroad and received by those individuals who simply have eyes to see and ears to hear.

Such are the *Tales of Forever*, tales like those first penned by Enoch, which were handed down to inspire subsequent generations of prophetic genius, producing such works as *Jasher*, *Genesis*, *Isaiah*, and *Daniel*. All this until finally the One Who had set His redemptive plan of *five and a half* "days" into motion strode upon the stage of world history to give His life as a ransom to fulfill that promise made to Adam and Eve.

In turn, we would one day partake of the drama of their lives in such a way that—though dead and buried long ago—they would impart meaning to us, not in a didactic way that leads to disenfranchisement and despair but one that conveys truth that resonates from age to age, from life to life. In examining the

213 *Romans* 10:17
214 *Galatians* 3:5

meaning of these lives, we would in some special way detect in them a way of interpreting the meaning of our own lives, and as a result of this peculiar connection, which stretched to us in our own time, we, too, though destined to die like Adam, would be able to reach for the impossible and thus be imbued with the same force that transformed Jesus' mortal coil from death to life.

In this way, the wondrous circle of life as God has intended it is made complete. In the beginning was the Word; from age to age, it is the Word that sustains the Universe; and through to the very end, it will be the power of this Word that communicates His eternal purpose to all the world. And one day a generation will arise—perhaps this generation—that Enoch spoke of so long ago when he recorded his conversation with the Lord, Who said:

> I'll describe two mysteries for you, Enoch. First, many rebels will violate the word of truth. They'll speak incredible things and pronounce many lies. Tremendous civilizations will be created, and many books will be composed in their own words.
>
> But My people will begin to write all My words properly in their own languages without altering or diminishing their meaning. They'll perform the task correctly, and then they'll possess everything I've said about them from the beginning.
>
> The other mystery to tell you about concerns the faithful and wise, who will be given books of joy, integrity, and remarkable wisdom. And having received the gift of those books, they'll believe in what they have to say. They'll rejoice in them, and all the faithful ones will acquire the knowledge of every righteous path through them and be rewarded.
>
> And someday, they'll call out to the people of Earth and make them listen to their wisdom.[215]

Time to Move On

SO ENDS PHASE ONE of *The Analyses* into the potential validity of *The Tales*, with Phase Two at the end of this book, begin-

215 *First Enoch* 104:7-11

ning in Act Three. So far, in Phase One, we introduced a fourfold investigative approach that hopefully helped to eliminate the stigma that has for too long tainted these neglected gems of biblical wisdom. In the process of doing this, one can now better see the extent to which these narratives correlate with the more familiar texts of the Canon, as well as the way that they clarify some of its most perplexing mysteries. Not only that, but they also help to explain why the God of *The Bible*, as the Ultimate Director of human history, has so persistently couched His message to mankind in what can best be understood as "the dramas of the ages."

Having set the stage this way, we will next turn to examining the process by which a disparate set of ancient manuscripts, depicting long-forgotten worlds, was updated and adapted so that a modern audience could relate to them. This will be followed by a brief history of the restoration of these manuscripts that were once thought to be lost forever.

Finally, after previewing *The Tales*, you will be ready to digest the actual narratives in all their dramatic glory, the contents of which include Enoch and his heavenly conversation, and the all-important promise of "days" given to that first couple after their having been exiled from the Garden of Eden—the length of which just happens to bear an uncanny relationship to the 5,500-year chronology found in *The Septuagint Bible*, and the dimensions of *five and a half* cubits built into The Ark of the Covenant.

This will be followed by the tale of Abraham and his journey toward faith, a story that chronicles the peculiar role that Adam's garment of sheepskin played in the lives of both Nimrod, the mighty hunter and rebel before God, as well as Esau, Abraham's grandson, so infamous for his ambition and greed.

From there, we will next turn to the tale of Pontius Pilate, who, after a lifetime of political scheming, had his life turned upside down when he came face to face with his most perplexing circumstance yet, in a story that involves Veronica's mysterious painting of Christ, and the equally mystifying seamless robe of Jesus.

More importantly, it should be noted here, that in the digesting of *The Tales*, readers will not only be partaking of the sublime wisdom contained in the narratives themselves, but

they will also be assimilating all the ingredients needed to properly apprehend the forthcoming proof—so artfully hidden in the five *sacred* things—of God's control and faithfulness that this entire work is building toward.

So, without further delay, it is time now to move on to *The Translation*.

THE TRANSLATION

The test of a translation, like the test of a book … is not a line here and there but coherence, movement, action; not how easily we may pull it to pieces and what interesting pieces it makes but how it first interests us, then absorbs us, and finally sweeps us along.

James I. Cook, *Edgar J. Goodspeed: Articulate Scholar*

A Matter of Style

The Latent Message

ONE OF THE MOST difficult aspects in bringing these stories to life for the sake of a modern audience was the all-important decision concerning the style of translation employed in their retelling. Crucial to this process were certain considerations, the first being the original style of writing in which the stories had been presented in their various incarnations up to the present day. As previously stated, *Tales of Forever* is a book that has been synthesized from manuscripts some of which date from the remotest periods of antiquity, such as *The First Book of Adam and Eve*, *The Secrets of Enoch*, *The Book of Jasher*, *The Letters of Herod and Pilate*, and *The Gospel of Nicodemus*.

When I learned of the existence of these stories more than three decades ago, they only existed in collections that had been published in the 1920s, while these in turn were reproductions from even earlier versions of the original manuscripts. Upon my initial reading of them, I felt much like someone who encounters the unfiltered works of William Shakespeare for the first time. These were definitely not stories that one could simply breeze through. Poetic yet mystifying, inspiring yet exasperating, they were written in a style that was clearly as archaic and outdated as anything penned by the Bard of Avon. Nearly incomprehensible at first glance, the sublime meaning of the texts seemed to arise only after a great deal of reading and re-reading, which required many hours of study and contemplation. Over the course of time, however, I not only became enthralled with the stories in these books, but I also became convinced that they were literary treasures in their own right. Unfortunately, because of the convoluted style in which they were written, I could also see why most modern minds would remain unimpressed and untouched by the latent message embedded in them.

After several years of sharing these stories with friends and colleagues—with admittedly mixed results—I noticed that something unusual began to happen as I attempted to engage

others with their contents. Gradually, as I continued to read the narratives aloud to those around me, I ceased to simply recite them verbatim as they were found in the books. I found myself "translating them on the fly" in order to better convey the meaning that I felt was trapped in their pages. Only then did people begin to become engaged, with the end result that they started offering remarks like: "These are some very interesting texts. They shed new light on questions I've always had about certain aspects of *The Bible*." And: "This is fascinating stuff. I wonder why we've never heard anything about these stories in church."

Finally, after countless readings of the stories, I came to the conclusion that they represented a startling, behind-the-scenes version of *The Bible*—an extended storyline that constituted an intriguing counterpart to the familiar versions of Scripture. Not only that, but at some point in my journey through this collection of *Tales*, I also began to see them as more than a collage of random texts. Slowly but surely, there emerged a distinct pattern of connectivity, which transformed this scattered compendium into a single, continuous timeline—one that literally pivots upon the little-known prophecy of The Great Five and a Half Days—with Enoch as the narrator of a series of stories, beginning with Adam and Eve, then Abraham and Nimrod, and finally Jesus and Pilate.

Unfortunately, there was still one seemingly insurmountable problem with my grandiose plan. Apart from biblical scholars and literary aficionados, I wondered: Who in this modern, skeptical world would ever take the time to decipher the content of these stories when they were trapped in a language frame that only hardcore Shakespeare fans could appreciate, let alone understand?

So, like every other author before me, the question remained the same: How could I go about creating believable dialog for characters who existed in some of the remotest chapters of human history? Would I simply resort to parroting the style of the *King James Bible* translators when attempting to depict the biblical past? For me, this would constitute the ultimate failure of nerve, because, quite frankly, I have never been satisfied with biblical movies that took this route. I mean, really, who in their right mind would ever believe that anyone in *The Bible*

actually talked like people who inhabited the world of Elizabethan England? Does anybody think, for one second, that Jesus, Abraham, or Adam spoke in iambic pentameter? Of course not. So why should audiences continue to endure such artistic nonsense? To me, it has always been nothing less than a gross oversimplification that just because a story involves historical characters who inhabit worlds unlike our own they must be portrayed as speaking with dialects and accents in order to convey their unique time and place.

A Clarity of Language

WITH THIS AGE-OLD dilemma, one comes face to face with the next critical consideration in trying to present the most ancient of tales to a modern audience. Throughout the history of storytelling, authors have made a concerted effort to flesh out their narratives by means of presenting three crucial elements—the *time* when a story occurred, the *place* where it occurred, and the *characters* who existed when and where that story occurred. Primarily, the way in which the first two aspects of storytelling are portrayed, that is, the "time" and "place" of any given story, have been done in a fairly straightforward manner. Whether the author's presentation of such matters can be characterized as either profoundly poetic or merely functional in style, the conveyance of time and place is generally more an indication of the author's personal writing style rather than anything intrinsic to the story itself.

On the other hand, the one aspect of a story that exists apart from the author's style is the way in which the "characters" of a story are presented, which is done not so much by way of what they *do* but how they *speak*. In other words, regardless of the background and origins of an author, the characters of a given narrative—either fictional or nonfictional—should always speak in a way that is true to that character's unique background and origins. Whereas an author may depict the time and place of a story in a multitude of ways without altering it, the way that characters speak will inevitably alter the reception of that story. More than any other aspect of the story, how characters speak must ring true to the time and place that they inhabit, or else the audience might interpret everything they do as false or

contrived. The depiction of the dialog of a story's characters, then, is the paramount hurdle with which an author must contend, and never more so than with a narrative like *Tales of Forever*, which attempts to portray characters that clearly have a specific historical setting.

A prime example of dialog that uniquely conveys the setting of a story can be found in the literary works of Mark Twain. Through his clever use of dialect, Twain not only conveys a character's personality but, with little or no back story at all, he also conveys their education level and position in society. On the positive side, Twain's use of dialect provides insight into his characters through a dialog that, by way of texture and sound, reveals a great deal about the setting of the story—one which conveys a truth far beyond the author's mere description of the time and place in which the characters exist. On the negative side, however, trying to read dialog that is steeped in a peculiar dialect is sometimes very difficult to decipher. Often narratives that resort to foreign dialects to convey the background of certain characters work on one level, but because the dialog is so stultified, the actual message of the work is literally lost in translation. As a result, books or movies with dialect-laden dialog might be applauded by one segment of the audience, such as critics or other artists, while the average patron winds up on the losing end because of the difficulties that arise from trying to decipher the dialog. Unable to follow the plot, the reader or viewer disengages from the narrative before they even have an opportunity to get involved with the story.

To avoid such a potential death knell to box-office success, many filmmakers have pursued an alternate route in attempting to convey the settings of their stories. Rather than employ characters that resort to hard-to-understand dialects, they use those who speak in the language of the people they portray while providing subtitles for the sake of the audience. Such is the case in films like *The Longest Day*, *Dances With Wolves*, and *The Passion of the Christ*. In *The Longest Day*, unlike most war films of that time, all the German and French characters speak in their own language, accompanied by English subtitles. *Dances With Wolves* has much of its dialog spoken in Lakota with English subtitles. And not to be outdone, *The Passion of the Christ* does not contain a single word in English. The entire film

is comprised of characters who speak Aramaic, Latin, and Hebrew. Yet ironically, in order to convey its ancient message to a modern audience, the filmmakers chose to subtitle the film in what can only be described as "vernacular English."[216]

Therefore, when it came time to establish the style of dialog in this modern adaption of ancient tales, all of these potential pitfalls and possibilities loomed large in my mind. As a result, I decided to make every effort to avoid any of the aforementioned clichés. What kind of historian would I be, I asked myself, if I sought to make Enoch and his counterparts speak like characters who had just stepped out of one of Shakespeare's plays simply because audiences expected biblical characters to speak that way? Above all, I sought to achieve a clarity of language with this newly forged rendition. I was not content to simply convey the meaning of these stories in the same way that a literary scholar might do. More than anything else, I wanted these timeless tales to be expressed in a language that could be understood by every strata of society, from the scholarly critic to the ordinary individual.

As it turns out, I am not alone in such an effort. As a matter of fact, the same thing has been happening for many years in respect to updating the Elizabethan English of the *King James* Version of *The Bible*. Not until 1885, with the creation of the *Revised* Version, had any significant changes been made to it since its inception in 1611. Then, in the wake of the growing popularity of modern-day revisions, the twentieth century saw more and more similar endeavors, spearheaded by leading theological minds like Edgar J. Goodspeed, who, in 1939, published *The Bible: An American Translation*. Although these kinds of translations have always been met with a mixture of praise and criticism, Goodspeed insisted that such efforts constituted a necessary evolution in the language of *The Bible*. Said James I. Cook, in his biography of the man:

> Nothing horrified Goodspeed more than the popular notion that the modern *Bible* translator merely tinkers with the *King James* Version, replacing its archaic words with their modern equivalents. For him, the case for a new translation rested … upon the papyrus discoveries

216 *On the Film: The Passion of the Christ*, Wikipedia

> of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He was convinced that these rendered intolerable, not simply the individual words but the entire linguistic style of the *King James* Version and its revisions. The papyri solved the problem of what kind of Greek was in *The New Testament*. It was not the classical or literary Greek of its own day... The papyri showed that *The New Testament* was written in the vernacular Greek of its time, the language of everyday life.[217]

This is why Goodspeed was so determined that despite all the well-intentioned protestations: "*The New Testament* must be retranslated if it is to reach the modern reader with anything like the force it had in antiquity."[218] And for Goodspeed that meant: "The only appropriate vehicle for such retranslation is the common vernacular English of everyday life."[219] Therefore, just as Goodspeed sought to make the canonical *Bible* more accessible by updating its language, I have sought to do a similar thing with the apocryphal books. Rather than assigning so many lines of ill-conceived dialog to the people in these stories, I chose to allow them to speak in a language entirely devoid of inappropriate dialects, which, in my view, contradicts an accurate depiction of reality. Let me explain what I mean by that.

Of Accents and Idioms

IMAGINE A CLASSIC film like *Gone With the Wind*, a drama set entirely in the Confederate South during the American Civil War. Because everyone in the story is a southerner living in the 1860s, the characters should all speak with a nineteenth-century southern drawl while invoking every known southern expression of that era. Right? But wait. Before you answer too quickly, take a moment to ask yourself one question, assuming that everyone reading this is also from a variety of ethnic backgrounds: When you converse with someone who possesses a mutual ethnicity as yourself, do you ever notice yourselves speaking with peculiar accents or idioms? I sincerely doubt it.

---

217 *Edgar Johnson Goodspeed: Articulate Scholar*, James I. Cook, p. 24
218 *The Making of the English New Testament*, Edgar J. Goodspeed, p. 110
219 Ibid. p. 110

The only time that someone would ever detect such peculiarities is when there are people or, in this case, characters, who are interacting with individuals of *other* nationalities. In other words, only when a story depicts characters from different language frames should an author employ the use of unique accents and idioms. Unless the dialog is intended to reveal the cultural difference between their characters, as might occur in a war movie where an American soldier is talking to a German one, or in a Western that has a cowboy conversing with an Indian, there is simply no logical—let alone artistic—reason to invoke the use of accents or idioms. Yet invoke them they do.

Such is clearly the case in a "period piece" like the aforementioned *Gone With the Wind*. Do most of its characters speak in that southern drawl so indicative of the late nineteenth century in order to convey a sense of time and place? Not surprisingly, the answer is yes. On one hand, most of them invoke classic southern accents, like Vivien Leigh, with her perky exclamations of "fiddle-dee-dee" and "great balls of fire." On the other hand, Clark Gable,whose character stems from Charleston, South Carolina, exhibits barely a hint of an accent, as evidenced by his famous tag line: "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn!" Either way, it appears that screenwriters are just as guilty as most *Bible* translators in their clichéd attempts to telegraph the "who," "where," and "when" of their plots. Fortunately, though, this has not always been so—in the case of both Hollywood and Holy Writ.

The employment of non-archaic dialog in a "period piece" is never more evident than in the critically acclaimed film *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. Though set at the turn of the nineteenth century, the movie does everything it can to avoid the sort of "countrified" dialog that is typically heard in most Westerns. As the story goes, this was a conscious, creative choice made by both the film's writer and director, William Goldman and George Roy Hill, respectively. Said Internet movie critic Eric D. Snider: "The dialog … is casual and nonchalant in a strikingly modern way, and their attitudes are not what you expect of people from the late 1800s… This is all by design. It's part of the reason the film was so popular with audiences at the time, and why it's still so well regarded today."[220]

220 *What's the Big Deal?: Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, Eric D. Snider

Case in point: When Butch and Sundance are being pursued by a posse and are desperate to formulate an escape plan, Cassidy proposes that they go to Bolivia, but the Kid is far from enthusiastic about the idea. "You just keep on thinking of stuff, Butch," he replies with a mocking tone. "That's what you're good at." Frustrated, Cassidy grumbles back, "I got vision, and the whole world wears bifocals."

As it turns out, this is precisely the kind of thing that Edgar J. Goodspeed had in mind as he approached his updating of the Elizabethan English of the *King James* Version of *The Bible*, in his 1939 translation of *The New Testament*. His biographer, James I. Cook, described it this way: "Goodspeed's aim was to avoid translation English, which he regarded as almost no English at all, to exclude all echoes of the familiar '*Bible* English' of the older versions, and, in their place, to use American idiom."[221]

Another way of looking at this same problem might be to imagine two Eskimos having a conversation. If we, as English-speaking individuals, were listening in on this conversation, we would naturally detect accents and idioms that were very different from our own. However, from the point of view of the Eskimos who were speaking to one another, they would not notice anything unusual at all. To them, they would just be having a normal conversation. So, based on this assumption, if an author were to translate this conversation for their readers, then why, for Heaven's sake, would they resort to such illogical and unnatural gimmicks like foreign accents or peculiar idioms simply to convey the fact that they were Eskimos?

With all this in mind, then, I set out to depict the characters in *Tales of Forever* as individuals who are indigenous to the same world, whether it is Adam conversing with Eve or Abraham talking to Nimrod or Jesus speaking with Pilate. And, therefore, like southerners speaking with other southerners, or cowboys with other cowboys, or Eskimos with other Eskimos, the characters in this work have been deliberately stripped of dialect-laden speech so that the concise meaning of what they have to say can finally resound from their ancient origins and penetrate our own world of modern sensibilities.

221 *Edgar Johnson Goodspeed: Articulate Scholar*, James I. Cook, p. 28

Foreshadow and Payoff

IN ADDITION TO updating the language of *The Tales*, they have also been thoroughly "fleshed out" in admittedly "cinematic" terms. This was done for several reasons, the first of which is because, as we previously noted, there is such a clear parallel between the dramatic narratives found in *The Bible* and those in the theater, literature, and cinema. The second reason was because, considering the significance of the first reason, the fact that it had not been done yet seemed so incongruous. That is to say, it was done because, in the opinion of this writer, it was long overdue in terms of the development of the dramatic narrative as a cultural phenomenon. What does that mean? Consider this, if you will. Historically speaking, in both the sacred and the secular realms, the earliest examples of storytelling were confined to a much simpler and condensed format. Only since the birth of modern literature and its ancestor, the cinema, has a more expanded mode of expression evolved with the subsequent maturation of the secular narrative—one which was only hinted at in the theatrical productions of ancient Greece and medieval Europe. Conversely, the sacred narrative has traditionally lagged behind in terms of this natural progression, and they have undoubtedly done so because of the built-in resistance to what is generally perceived as "tampering" with the original narratives themselves. Such resistance is certainly the very thing that intrepid pioneers like Goodspeed experienced regularly, even as he correctly envisioned the potential boon to humanity as a result of his updating of not just the archaic language but also the outmoded narrative style of existing translations of *The Bible*.

The next reason for adding this new dimension to the original stories was because, even in their unembellished state, they were stories that were predominantly told through the actions and dialog of their characters as opposed to a litany of religious precepts or ideology. In other words, *The Tales* inhabiting the world of apocryphal literature were already steeped in dramatic elements so that one only needed to ask a few questions when deciding how to make them truly "cinematic." One example of this latent cinematic element appears throughout the original stories in that, much akin to earlier forms of the narrative,

the "dialog" in them was usually expressed through extended "monologs." Such a mode of expression might have seemed perfectly natural in the past, but, typically, modern audiences find them tedious and artificial. Therefore, in order to bring these portions of antiquated storytelling into the present day, one simply needed to "translate" these *mono*logs into a scenario in which two characters are expressing the original content of the story in the form of *dia*logs. Mind you, though, the primary content of the original stories was never changed in this process of retelling them. Their inherent potential was merely "fleshed out." Altering their content—that is, the explicit intent of the original authors—was never an option. Instead, what we are talking about here is not a matter of changing their "content" so much as changing the conveyance of said content.

Another way in which these stories were updated hearkens back to our earlier discussion on the concept of parallel elements in both sacred and secular storytelling. By that I mean, because of the inherent similarity between the dramatic narratives found in Scripture and those in the theater, literature, and cinema, the potential for elaborating *The Tales* was always an obvious one. Though these two modes of communication have generally been viewed as being alien to one another, they are not so different after all. Consequently, in sacred terms, the dramas of *The Bible* unfold according to a principle known as "shadow and substance," while in secular terms, the dramas of the theater, literature, and cinema are conveyed by means of what has come to be known as "foreshadow and payoff."

What, exactly, does "foreshadow and payoff" mean? In filmic terms, foreshadow and payoff means that, in regard to both plot and character, the main body of a motion picture is in balance with its climax. In other words, through a filmmaker's clever use of plot details and character elements, a film's beginning and middle will naturally flow toward its inevitable end, and thus, from the audience's perspective, the finale will not seem to come "from out of nowhere." Otherwise, it does not matter how dramatic the ending of a movie is, without this proper balancing act of foreshadow and payoff, the audience will detect such foul play and quite rightly feel cheated by a finale that has clearly been tacked on simply for effect. Only when the "big ending" of a picture grows "organically," as it

were, from all that has preceded its climax is that movie favorably received. This idea is never more evident than when one takes the time to see how this narrative device has been used in the proper way, in just the right doses, in some of the most successful films of all time. Generally, foreshadow and payoff are executed filmically in one of two ways—either through plot devices or thematic devices. Two films that have famously used plot devices to achieve this effect are *Jaws* and *Goldfinger*.

In *Jaws*, the finale comes when Chief Brody shoots and detonates the compressed air tank lodged in the shark's mouth, blowing it to kingdom come. But long before this occurs, it is cleverly foreshadowed in the main body of the film. During the early stages of the men's hunt for the man-eater, one of the oxygen tanks aboard their ship accidentally breaks loose and is quickly grabbed and secured. "Damn it, Martin!" exclaims the oceanographer Matt Hooper. "This is compressed air. You screw around with these tanks and they're gonna blow up!" With typical cynicism, Quint, the hard-bitten shark hunter, retorts, "Yeah, real fine gear you brought out here, Mister Hooper. But I don't know what that bastard shark's gonna do with it. Might eat it, I suppose. Seen one eat a rocking chair one time." At first, when this tension-filled dialog takes place, the audience experiences it as but a random flow of events that contribute to the mounting drama. In reality, however, it is all that and more; it also serves as an artfully planted clue that prepares the audience for one of the great climaxes in cinematic history, when Brody kills the shark by taking advantage of information that previously seemed incidental. Thus, the big ending does not materialize out of thin air but is a direct payoff of a foreshadowing event woven into the story entirely for the sake of the audience.

In *Goldfinger*, there are actually two instances of the foreshadowing of the demise of the villain—in this case, the sinister mute servant, Oddjob, as well as his boss, the namesake of the picture, Goldfinger himself. First, James Bond takes care of Oddjob by acting swiftly in connecting a loose electrical wire and electrocuting Oddjob as he is dislodging his deadly flying steel-brimmed hat from an iron cage. But prior to this, it was perfectly mirrored in the opening scene of the film when Bond outwits an assassin whom James shoves into a water-filled

bathtub, then tosses a "live" appliance into the tub, also electrocuting him. In this way, the filmmakers not only demonstrate the inimitable Agent 007's resourcefulness in eliminating one of his enemies, but they also foreshadow the way he will eventually bring down one of his most famous opponents. As for the demise of Goldfinger: In another example of foreshadow and payoff, Bond is finally able to rid himself of this criminal mastermind when a stray bullet blows out the airplane's window and sucks the villain out, thus ending Goldfinger's tyranny. But before this happens, it, too, is adeptly foreshadowed. Having been captured, Bond is being transported by plane to Goldfinger's headquarters by his personal pilot, Pussy Galore, who holds him at gunpoint, saying, "Do you want to play it easy or the hard way?" Bond, however, cool as ever, replies, "Now, Pussy, you know a lot more about planes than guns. That's a Smith and Wesson .45, and if you fire at this close range, the bullet will pass through me and the fuselage like a blowtorch through butter. The cabin will depressurize, and we'll both be sucked into outer space together." So again, what initially appears to be just a passing remark actually serves to provide the necessary information to the audience when, in the final scene, the very thing that Bond had warned about occurs.

Apart from using plot devices, such as a particular action or piece of dialog to foreshadow a film's finale, another form of this principle of foreshadow and payoff involves the use of thematic devices. As such, films that utilize this format are much broader in their technique. Instead of interjecting a single foreshadowing event that results in an eventual payoff, these films rely on a whole series of subtle but potent moments throughout the picture, which, together, help build toward its climax. Famous examples of this type include such classics as *Shane*, *The Searchers*, and *The Godfather*.

In *Shane*, a mysterious drifter rides in from out of the desert and befriends a family of desperate homesteaders, caught in the throes of a range war, sometime after the American Civil War. No sooner does Shane arrive on the scene, however, than he reveals that he is a man with a haunted past. At the slightest provocation—the young son's cocking of his toy rifle, the crunching steps of a stray deer outside the cabin window—and instantly, like a coiled rattlesnake, Shane is ready to draw

his six-shooter on his imagined foe. Embarrassed by his own abruptness, Shane proceeds to exchange his buckskins and pistol for a pair of jeans and a pickaxe; in short, Shane the gunman becomes Shane the sodbuster. And although he quickly takes sides with this family, in opposition to Rufus Ryker, the heartless cattle baron who is hell-bent on running roughshod over every family in the valley, Shane seems just as determined to do it without resorting to gunplay ever again. Emboldened by Shane's apparent weakness, Ryker brings an even more menacing threat into the situation in the form of a hired gun by the name of Jack Wilson, who soon taunts one of the homesteaders into an obvious mismatch and ruthlessly guns him down in a mud-filled street. For the already-anxious homesteaders, this is the last straw, as more and more of them decide to pull up their stakes and leave. Still, Shane seems strangely unmoved. Only one man is willing to oppose Ryker, and that is the father of the family, Joe Starrett. In vain, his wife pleads with Shane to stop her husband from such a foolhardy enterprise, but the quiet stranger declines, much to the chagrin of the man's family. Only when Shane is informed that Ryker is drawing Joe into an ambush does he finally relent; only then does Shane put away his jeans and axe, and once again dons his buckskins and pistol, confronting Ryker and his hired gun in a final showdown. As Ryker looks on, Shane coolly stares down the malevolent Wilson—a man who is clearly unimpressed with the reticent drifter standing before him. Then it happens: The man haunted by his past, the man so reluctant to take up arms ever again, finally unleashes all his pent-up anger, and like the coiled rattlesnake that he is, explodes in a fury of gunfire, killing Wilson and then Ryker before they barely have time to pull their weapons. And just like that, every finely crafted moment in this classic film comes to a resounding crescendo—an absolutely perfect example of cinematic symmetry, if ever there was one.

In *The Searchers*, Comanche raiders kidnap Debbie Edwards, the young niece of Civil War veteran Ethan Edwards, initiating an intense and extended search for her by Ethan and her adopted brother, Martin Pawley. But what ostensibly begins as a rescue effort by Ethan and Martin changes over time. As the years roll on and they still have not been able to locate Debbie, Ethan's fierce hatred of all things Indian begins to blind him

to his niece's humanity. Because Debbie has lived among the Comanches for so long, Martin comes to realize that Ethan feels she is no longer worth rescuing, and he must now do everything he can to rescue her before his uncle can do her any harm. When they finally find Debbie, Martin must physically shield her from Ethan, who menacingly aims his pistol, demanding that he step aside. But before Ethan can make good on his intentions, he is shot in the shoulder by a Comanche arrow, thus reprieving Debbie for the time being. Only later do the men track her down again in the camp of her kidnapper, fully realizing that if they do attack the Indian's camp, it means that Debbie will probably be killed by her captors rather than their relinquishing her. "That's what I'm counting on," rages Ethan, to which Martin protests vehemently, "She's alive, and she's gonna stay alive." Ethan then roars back: "Living with Comanches ain't being alive!" Only in the final sequence of this nightmarish search does Ethan catch up with Debbie, who, seeing the blistering anger in her uncle's eyes, recoils in terror. And then it happens: Upon seeing his niece face to face after all these years, Ethan is smitten and, disarmed of all his fury, his compassion overcomes his quest for vengeance. With quiet resolve, he tells her at last, "Let's go home, Debbie."

In *The Godfather*, Vito Corleone is the Sicilian head of a crime syndicate who rules with an odd blend of honor, justice, and vendetta. Known as the Don by his enemies who fear him and the Godfather by his family who respect him, he is a ruthlessly shrewd man who nonetheless displays great love and compassion for his three grown sons, each one with their own unique personality. Two are clearly destined for a life of crime—Sonny, the hotheaded firebrand, and Fredo, the ne'er-do-well oldest son, who cannot hold a candle to his younger brothers. Then there is Michael, the war hero who returns home on the day of his younger sister's wedding. Dismayed by his family's reputation and openly critical of their activities, Michael insists to his fiancé that he has absolutely no intention of following in his father's footsteps. However, when Don Corleone is nearly killed in a failed assassination attempt, Michael inadvertently becomes ensnared by the very world that he had so adamantly refused to be a part of. At first, he is merely acting true to his nature by bravely guarding his father from further harm as the

Don recuperates from his wounds, but then in a bold and impulsive move, he volunteers to strike back at the men responsible for his father's attack. After gunning down a rival crime boss and a corrupt police captain, Michael embarks on a completely new path, and as the years go by, he plunges deeper and deeper into the life that neither he nor his ailing father had intended for him. Upon Vito's passing from the scene, Michael masterfully orchestrates the assassination of all his rival crime bosses, and then it happens: As his incredulous wife looks on, the door slowly closes between her and the Godfather.

Now that this principle of foreshadow and payoff has been illustrated by way of a variety of films, one might naturally ask the question: How can any of this pertain to a discussion of adapting *Tales of Forever*? First and foremost, it should be noted that all five of the previously mentioned films were adapted from novels, which means that the source material, as such, contained more plotlines and characters than a movie is capable of sustaining. Consequently, the screenwriters who were adapting these novels into movie scripts were all faced with the same challenges that I faced in adapting *The Tales* from what they once were to what they are now. In other words, the primary task on both our parts was to sift through an array of events and personalities, and to forge them into a single, cohesive through-line story. To do this, the first order of business was to decide which aspects of each story, from among this plethora of information, were best suited for this framework we have just described, that is to say, a narrative that conforms to this filmic principle of foreshadow and payoff. Fortunately, this was not nearly as difficult as one might imagine, because as I previously stated, these ancient narratives, even in their most primitive form, already possessed this innate potential. Like so many diamonds in the rough, these essential elements were just lying about, ready to be mined, cut, and polished in the hands of the master jeweler. And as it so happened, the key to unleashing this potential was to develop and adapt them in accordance to the aforementioned principle of foreshadow and payoff.

Still, in view of such elaborate alterations, one may ask the next series of inevitable questions: Do you not feel guilty "meddling" with what might otherwise be deemed sacred territory? After all, are you not in the process of trying to convince us

that these apocryphal stories should be held on par with the canonical books? Why not simply stick to updating the stories from their archaic language into a more modern form while remaining faithful to the original stories, word for word, and be done with it? Why insert all this added business of foreshadow and payoff? Well, to answer such questions, I return to the thinking of Goodspeed, who was adamantly against this very thing when he said, "The most serious translation errors made in updating the language of *The Bible*, from Tyndale to the *Revised* Versions, was their adoption of a word-for-word method, with never a glance at the line of thought."[222] On this subject of updating the narratives of Scripture into those that were more suitable for a modern audience, James I. Cook had this to say about Goodspeed's thinking:

> A translation which was faithful in its individual parts but unfaithful in its total impression would be wrong in principle. That had been the greatest weakness of earlier translators. They had been more concerned with words than with phrases, with clauses than with sentences, with verses than with paragraphs. The test of a translation, like the test of a book, said Goodspeed, "is not a line here and there but coherence, movement, action; not how easily we may pull it to pieces and what interesting pieces it makes but how it first interests us, then absorbs us, and finally sweeps us along."[223]

Never has this advice been taken more to heart than in one of the finest examples of adapting a story from *The Bible* to the big screen, in a film that we have already examined in a previous chapter of this book. However, we will now be doing so after having come to understand this narrative principle of foreshadow and payoff. That film is *The Ten Commandments*. And just in case you think it sacrilegious to "add" to *The Bible*—a prohibition directed only to *The Book of Revelation*, by the way—imagine how this epic tale would have played out if those who had adapted it had not been audacious enough to "meddle" with its original storyline? Does this mean that those who did the "add-

222 *Edgar Johnson Goodspeed: Articulate Scholar*, James I. Cook, p. 28
223 Ibid. p. 29

ing" were being disrespectful of Scripture when they chose to interject events and characters that were not already there? Fortunately, the end result and the test of time have answered both of these questions in resounding fashion. Clearly, they were more than respectful in their audacity; they were downright reverential. More to the point, they expressed this reverence by way of an overriding sense of foreshadow and payoff. Let us take a moment to revisit the movie in light of what we have just learned, and you will see exactly what I mean.

In *The Ten Commandments*, the film opens with Pharaoh's soothsayers warning the Egyptian king about an ominous prophecy concerning a Hebrew deliverer who will one day lead a slave revolt, declaring, "A star has proclaimed his birth." In starting the picture this way, with a scene that is nowhere to be found in *The Book of Exodus*, anyone familiar with the original story in *The Bible* is immediately struck by the fact that this rendition of Moses as Messiah is no longer simply an *Old Testament* story; it is also one that is deeply rooted in *The New Testament*. In other words, the film's payoff as Moses, the deliverer of Israel, is derived entirely from the way in which *The Bible* itself depicts the meaning of Moses' life as it is seen through the prism of Jesus, the Deliverer of humanity. As it is written: "By faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt."[224]

And so, as the first scene of the movie goes in regard to Moses as Messiah, so goes the rest of the picture, and—I repeat—all made clear by way of the ingenious usage of this principle of foreshadow and payoff. For example, before Moses ever delivers the nation of Israel as a whole, he first rescues a pair of Hebrew slaves. One is a woman who just happens to be his aged mother, Yochabel, although Moses, as a prince of Egypt, raised in secrecy by Pharaoh's daughter, is still unaware of this fact; the other is Joshua, whom Moses sets free from a death sentence for striking an Egyptian while attempting to save Yochabel from being crushed by a quarry stone.

224 *Hebrews* 11:24-26

Later, when Pharaoh asks his son Rameses if he has learned the identity of the would-be Hebrew deliverer, Rameses insists that they do not need a deliverer because they already have Moses, who, even before God had ordained the people their Sabbath day of rest, had instituted a day of rest for the Hebrew slaves, much to the chagrin of Rameses. Then, when Bithiah, Moses' Egyptian adoptive mother, tries to persuade Yochabel to leave the country before Moses learns the truth of his Hebrew heritage, Yochabel resists her plea. When Bithiah challenges her priority as Moses' mother, Yochabel poignantly confesses that though she had yearned to reach out to her son, she resisted the urge, lamenting that she "dared not even touch the hem of his garment," a phrase that is clearly an allusion to Moses as a Christ figure.

When Moses finally does learn the truth about his Hebrew heritage, he is confronted by the two Egyptian women in his life whom he loves most, and in doing so, he must endure words of temptation as tearing as any offered by Satan to Jesus in the wilderness. First, Bithiah begs him to hide the truth that will only lead to certain servitude and hardship, asking plaintively, "Cannot justice and truth be served better upon a throne, where all men may benefit from your goodness and strength?" Then, his first love, the Egyptian princess Nefritiri chides Moses after retrieving him from the mud pits: "First Friend of the Pharaoh, Keeper of the Royal Seal, Prince of Thebes, and Beloved of the Nile God… A man of mud!" But when Moses takes it all in strides, Nefritiri scoffs, "Is this what you really want? To be a slave? If you want to help your people, come back to the palace. Oh, Moses, the gods have fashioned you for greatness … and when you are Pharaoh, you can free your people." But just as *The Book of Hebrews* would later record, Moses summarily spurns their offers of instant gratification and chooses the more difficult path that God has personally laid out for him, forever turning his back on the throne of Egypt.

And again, to reinforce the Christ allusion, when Yochabel sees that Moses is willing to give up his Egyptian royalty in favor of pursuing his daring role as their destined deliverer, her words clearly echo those of another mother who would also come to realize the messianic role that was to be played by her son. That mother's name is Mary. Says Yochabel, "Blessed am

I of all mothers in the land, for my eyes have beheld Your deliverer."

Still, before Moses ever takes on the mantle of deliverer, he first suffers in the mud pits alongside his fellow Hebrew slaves, where he is personally confronted with the brutality of their Egyptian taskmasters. When an old man is attacked for his dignified protest, the mortally wounded fellow reveals his lifelong wish to Moses, that of one day seeing the promised deliverer with his own eyes. With bitter irony, Moses asks under his breath, "What deliverer could break the power of Pharaoh?" "You!" barks the taskmaster to the others standing there. "Clay carriers. Throw this carrion to the vultures." Then the taskmaster snaps at Moses, "You. Take his place." And just as Jesus willingly took our place as the recipient of God's wrath for the consequence of the sins of all mankind, Moses, too, willingly and without a single word of protest steps down into the muck and mire of that muddy pit to stand side by side with his kinsmen slaves.

Finally, after receiving God's call from the burning bush, Moses explains to Joshua that he is to lead the Hebrews out of Egyptian bondage, and Joshua, like the Apostle Peter in his day, brashly looks to the sword for deliverance. But once again reminiscent of Christ, Moses declares, "It is not by the sword that the Lord will deliver His people but by the staff of a shepherd." In the end, it is this very staff that Moses stretches out toward the Red Sea, which temporarily bars the escape of the Israelites as Pharaoh's fierce charioteers move in on them. Then in one of the most memorable climaxes in cinema history, Moses, with staff in hand, confidently utters a mighty word of faith, as he and the people with him watch in awe as the waters part in a spectacular display of God's power, thus enabling the people to cross over through the midst of the sea as if it were dry land.

In foreshadow after foreshadow, then, this artful movie lays down its marvelous tapestry of clues that all eventually reveal the true depth of their meaning in the story's final payoff, as Moses slowly but surely rises to embrace his grand destiny. And just as God, the Ultimate Director of human history, must have surely directed the steps of the real-life Moses, Cecil B. DeMille, the director of *The Ten Commandments*, in audacious stroke after stroke, masterfully directs the heroic life of his cin-

ematic counterpart. More importantly, far from diminishing the message of faith and hope contained in Scripture, as some might argue, this classic film actually makes these biblically-inspired realities even more accessible, all through the unparalleled power of the dramatic narrative.

Thus, it was with all the foregoing ideas in mind that *The Tales* were reworked, that is to say, not just in the updating of their language but in the extent to which they could be infused with the same vital elements that are found in a modern-day narrative. And all with the utmost intention that this new adaption of *The Tales* should "first interest us, then absorb us, and finally sweep us along." In the final analysis, it will be this radically modern, dramatic approach to the reworking of these *Tales* that sets this work apart from any other in dealing with the subject of whether or not the so-called *Lost Books of The Bible* should be restored to their former status in the hierarchy of God's wisdom.

THE INTERLUDE

Men take it for granted today that in order to understand anything human … they should search out its history… So pervasive has historicism become that we tend to forget it is itself a historical phenomenon.

Tom F. Driver, *Romantic Quest and Modern Query*

The Curtain Rises

Impossible Wonders

IN 1768, AN ANCIENT manuscript known as *The First Book of Enoch* was located in the mountains of Ethiopia. At the same time, Britain and America and, in effect, most of Europe were hopelessly embroiled in what was actually the first world war of ideas. Then, just when it seemed that our troubled world needed them most, more and more of these literary treasures from antiquity began to be rediscovered.

Ironically, though, after managing to recover these impossible wonders from the depths of oblivion, no one bothered to translate them. Rather than being seen as potential gems of spiritual wisdom, these priceless documents were relegated to the status of rare artifacts. So, for more than half a century, they sat unopened and unread on various museum shelves, simply gathering dust. But once the arduous task of decipherment had been completed, manuscripts like *First Enoch* began providing the West with a vivid, haunting glimpse into humanity's spiritual origins and destiny. Almost overnight, an entirely new way of understanding ourselves had been unveiled, as old as time itself.

Centuries of Suppression

STILL, AS MUCH AS these manuscripts have managed to illuminate the human condition, they have also sparked an inordinate amount of derision and controversy. Having survived for twenty centuries or more, these priceless documents depict events that reach far beyond normally accepted limits of prehistoric time. Most notable among these—besides *First Enoch*—are *The First Book of Adam and Eve*, *The Secrets of Enoch*, *The Book of Jasher*, *The Letters of Herod and Pilate*, and *The Gospel of Nicodemus*. Sadly, however, they have all generally been ignored, dismissed, or suppressed, presumably because of their provocative rendering of historical events and persons.

A typical example of this is *First Enoch*, which had been

read and respected by Jews and Christians alike, and which had stood side by side with *The Book of Revelation* during the first four centuries of the Christian Era. While many of the Church Fathers, such as Clement, Ambrose, and Tertullian, endorsed it, others did not hold to this favorable view, and because of the efforts of influential opponents of the book, like Augustine and Jerome, who were critical of Enoch's description of those peculiar angels, or Watchers as they were called, the book was eventually deemed heretical. Along with other Enochic writings, it was banned from the mainstream of Scripture. Shredded and burned, the book was lost to the West for over a thousand years. Yet with remarkable persistence, many of these ancient gems have, slowly but surely, made their way back into circulation. Today, thanks to the efforts of a handful of men who were uniquely capable of seeing beyond the veil of skepticism and doubt, nearly everyone has heard something about these remarkable books.

Still, this never seems to answer the inevitable question: What relevance could a bunch of ancient manuscripts provide for an increasingly cynical world? The standard answer has always been that these books were designed so that a chosen few could understand them, but as to how this special remnant is supposed to assist in ushering in this awareness of God's truth, the canonical record does not reveal; which brings us back to the subject of extra-biblical texts. With the unexpected occurrence of the Qumran findings of *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, the notion of recovering "hidden" wisdom literature has become more and more widespread. Consequently, it no longer seems so farfetched that there might be other sources of biblical truth not found amongst the traditional sixty-six books of *The Bible*. What is more, these sources of truth are able to provide critical missing pieces to the biblical record. In this way, these remarkable texts are helping to answer questions that have puzzled scholars for hundreds, if not thousands, of years.

This is why, even before a place like Qumran could ever have been imagined, when mere rumors of a surviving Enochic text began to surface, the Scottish explorer James Bruce was eager to get his hands on a copy, no matter the cost to him personally. So in 1773, Bruce endured an extremely hazardous journey to Ethiopia, where he was able to secure three copies of the rare

book. Then in 1821, Dr. Richard Laurence, regius professor of Hebrew at Oxford, translated the work into English, providing the West with its first glimpse into Enoch's "forbidden mysteries." No longer would we remain a victim of centuries of suppression. No longer could the traditions of men keep us in ignorance concerning the role of spiritual pioneers like Enoch, the scribe.[225]

As a result, we can study these so-called "apocryphal" texts for ourselves. Now we are free to digest the contents of these remarkable books on our own. We can meditate on their mystical sayings and relive the fantastic journey of Enoch, as easily as any described by the likes of Jules Verne or H.G. Wells. We can now witness firsthand how God is still using Enoch as a type of Christ, even after his supposed "death," from his being taken up to Heaven, where he served as a divine mediator, right up to his reappearance as one of the Two Witnesses described in *The Book of Revelation*.

Thanks to the courage and dedication of men like Bruce and Laurence, who succeeded in restoring these ancient texts to our Western world, almost everyone who has ever studied biblical history has come to learn about Enoch and the strange angelic beings called the Watchers. Their fabled story provides the building blocks for countless mythological motifs, particularly concerning their respective roles in the construction of The Great Pyramid of Giza. Since time immemorial, one civilization after another has told and retold its own version of a miraculously exalted hero, poised to usher in an age of enlightenment for the faithful. But what does tradition have to say about the rest of Enoch's life? Unfortunately, except for the brief passages in Scripture, tradition has very little to say. What really happened to Enoch during his ascension to Heaven? Did God simply spirit him away without leaving humanity a single word of explanation afterward? And why does there seem to be so little written about Enoch's role in the creation of *The Bible*?

Furthermore, how did Enoch react when an angel told him he was being recruited as a conveyor of the mysteries of God? What was the reaction of Enoch's family after he told them the news? What did his family do with the books he wrote? And could the accounts produced so long ago by Enoch and others

225 See Act Three: The Players—*Enoch as: The Go-Between*

like him finally be starting to prove their relevance, not simply to a few appointed people but to an entire world, ready and waiting for their lost message?

These are just some of the questions that this book, *Tales of Forever*, will attempt to grapple with, but it will do so in a way unlike any other that you have ever encountered. It will not seek to approach the issue in a strictly formal manner, and although many decades of scholarship have contributed to its creation, it will not attempt to do so in a purely scholastic way, either. Rather, the stories in this work will attempt to reveal a radical new approach to the key personalities and events of biblical history.

Admittedly, however, the unique approach to the historical events and persons contained in this work was not entirely my own creation. It came instead as an outgrowth of the development of mankind's evolving understanding of the nature of historicism itself and the subsequent pursuit of historical certainty. About this evolution of historical thought, Tom F. Driver, professor emeritus of theology and culture at Union Theological Seminary, said:

> Men take it for granted today that in order to understand anything human (often to understand natural phenomena as well) they should search out its history—its genesis and the processes by which it has come to its present state. For modern man, historical investigation is not only a method, it is very nearly *the* method, an approach to reality that conditions all modern thought. So pervasive has historicism become that we tend to forget it is itself a historical phenomenon. As a matter of fact, it revolutionized human thought only in the nineteenth century and then only in those places where European culture was dominant.[226]

According to Driver, the most important pioneer in this revolution in historical thinking was the eighteenth-century Italian scholar Giambattista Vico. More than anything else, it has been Vico's philosophy of history, which Driver called "a theory of

226 *Romantic Quest and Modern Query: A History of the Modern Theater*, Tom F. Driver, pp. xi-xii

historical cognition,"[227] that ultimately provided the impetus for the present narratives found in *Tales of Forever*. Concerning this theory, Driver articulated Vico's belief that:

> Since man is native to history … man is capable of re-evoking the past in the depth of his own consciousness. Given a certain amount of historical data to begin with, man is able, through his imagination, to overcome the gap that separates the past from the present.[228]

This, in essence, is what this book sets out to do; it aims to provide the reader with all the necessary historical data that these ancient manuscripts have been offering all along. This data, however, is not reconstructed according to the dictates of intellectual inquiry alone. Instead, the persons and events depicted in them have been presented as a full-blown dramatic narrative, and it is this narrative that provides the ultimate foundation for the re-examination of said persons and events. In doing so, readers are invited to utilize their own God-given imagination to psychologically and emotionally bridge the seemingly insurmountable gulf between past and present. In other words, instead of the typical piece-meal approach so common to most historical treatises, *Tales of Forever* will provide a completely unique insight into many of the watershed moments of our collective history through the imaginative power of the dramatic narrative.

The Stuff of Legends

IN OUR FIRST installment, we witness firsthand Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden and God's reaction to their child-like response as they desperately try, again and again, to get back into His good graces. We see the establishment of the very first promises from God as He explains His plan to save them from a tragic fate.

For this wondrous tale, two men must be acknowledged for their selfless pursuit of biblical knowledge, men whose reputation in the Western world of theological studies was unim-

227 *Romantic Quest and Modern Query: A History of the Modern Theater*, Tom F. Driver, p. xiii

228 Ibid. p. xiii

peachable in their day. They are S.C. Malan, a British biblical scholar and linguist of Oriental languages, and W.R. Morfill, a British professor of Slavonic languages at Oxford. In 1882, Malan produced the first English translation of *The First Book of Adam and Eve*; and in 1896, Morfill gave us his translation of *The Secrets of Enoch*. Thanks to the efforts of this intrepid pair, humanity is able to once again partake of the long-forgotten world of the most famous couple of all time.

The story of Adam and Eve is literally the stuff of legends, from their prior glory in Eden to their disgraceful expulsion from the garden. Every culture the world over has incorporated some version of the Forbidden Fruit being offered up by some shape-shifting monster, poised to bring about the downfall of the first family of the clan. But what does tradition have to say about Adam and Eve after they were kicked out of Eden? Unfortunately, except for the brief passages in *The Book of Genesis*, it has little to say. What really happened to them during their exile experience? Did God simply abandon them to a life of hopeless despair? And why was nothing else written about the rest of their lives?

In *Tales of Forever*, we discover for ourselves how God continued to nurture Adam and Eve during every phase of their lives, from providing them with sheepskins for clothing, right up to His teaching them how to make their first offerings to Him. How did Adam and Eve learn to survive on their own after being deprived of direct access to God? What did Satan do in his attempt to thwart God's every effort in restoring them to their former state of grace and peace? How did Adam and Eve react when confronted with the idea of marriage? How many children did they have? What were their names? And could the woman that Cain was destined to marry actually have been his brother Abel's twin sister?[229]

In our next installment, we begin in the palace of Nimrod, the first great rebel against God after the Flood. There, young Abraham is born to Nimrod's chief prince, Terah, as an awesome celestial event heralds his birth, thereby inaugurating the next phase of God's remarkable deliverance of Adam and his descendants.

For this adventurous tale, we Westerners are greatly in-

229 See Act Three: The Players—*Adam as: The Defendant*

debted to one man: Moses Samuel, the British author and translator of Hebrew works, who, in 1838, gave us the first English translation of *The Book of Jasher*. Thanks to Samuel, we can now understand, like never before, what really inspired the one person, who, in the face of such opposition and peril, survived to spawn the mightiest lineage the world has ever known.

Nearly everyone has heard the story of the man whom God told to sacrifice his son. Their tale is an epic one, retold in countless ways, with nearly every culture ever since incorporating some form of sacrificial offering in order to ensure the clan's ultimate survival. But what does tradition have to say about why Abraham seemed so willing to do something like that in the first place? Unfortunately, except for the brief passages in *Genesis*, tradition does not have much to say. Did Abraham always have such unswerving faith? If so, then why was he so devoted to God? And if not, what enabled this one man, apart from all other men, to become the father of faith?

In *Tales of Forever*, we discover for ourselves how God guided Abraham throughout every stage of his life, from rescuing him as a young man from the furnace of Nimrod, right up to the time when He asked him to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah. What role did Noah and Shem play in the development of Abraham during his formative years? What lengths did Nimrod take to kill Abraham before he could fulfill his world-changing destiny? How did Satan react to Abraham's attempts to sacrifice his son to God? Was Isaac really unaware of his father's intentions as he was being led up that mountain? And when Abraham told Pharaoh that Sarah was his sister was his story really so far from the truth, considering that she was his brother's daughter?[230]

Finally, in our third installment, we come face to face with the most amazing chapter in God's rescue effort yet, the very hour when the ransom for that deliverance was to be paid in full. In it, we confront many of the lesser-known facts behind the trial and execution of Jesus of Nazareth, as well as the startling events that took place afterward, despite every attempt to erase them from the pages of history.

For this most pivotal tale of all, the Protestant West owes much to a trio of men. They are William Wake, a British cler-

230 See Act Three: The Players—*Abraham as: The Stranger*

gyman who went on to become the archbishop of Canterbury; William Wright, a British Orientalist and professor of Arabic at Cambridge; and B. Harris Cowper, a British archeologist, historian, and translator. In 1693, Wake gave us the first English translation of *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, while in 1865, Wright gave us *The Letters of Herod and Pilate*, and in 1867, Cowper gave us *The Epistles of Pilate to Caesar*, *The Trial and Condemnation of Pilate*, and *The Death of Pilate, who Condemned Jesus*. Woven together into a continuous dramatic narrative, these texts combine to reveal an unparalleled glimpse into the hearts and minds of the players who took part in the most notorious trial ever recorded.

There is hardly a person alive who is not familiar with the scene of Pontius Pilate washing his hands before the angry mob that is demanding the death of Jesus. The story is renowned throughout the annals of world history, with every culture around the globe incorporating some version of the dying-and-rising hero providing his life for the sake of the group's continued existence. But what does tradition have to say about why Pilate really sentenced Jesus to die? Unfortunately, except for the brief passages in *The Gospels*, tradition has little to say. Did Pilate condemn Jesus because he was trying to avoid another bloody riot on his watch? Or was he really acting on orders from Rome, which required the pitiless end to all threats to the Empire? And when his wife tried to warn him about the innocence of the Man he was about to have crucified, did Pilate really believe her after all?

In *Tales of Forever*, we discover for ourselves why Pontius Pilate acted the way he did during his encounters with Jesus, from his early career as a ruthless politician, right up to his reaction to the machinations of the entrenched religious leaders in Judea at that time. Were the disciples of Jesus the only people who believed in Him or supported His cause? How did Satan react to Jesus' attempts to sacrifice His own life? What was Jesus really doing during the three days and nights prior to His resurrection? Was Jesus the only person Who was reported to have risen from the dead? And after everything was said and done, what was Pilate's real motive in turning Jesus over to a Roman crucifixion, even after he had openly declared Him innocent of every charge?[231]

231 See Act Three: The Players—*Pilate as: The Public Defender*

Beyond the Veil

TALES OF FOREVER, then, is no ordinary rewriting of the same old stories. In this telling, for example, we find that, contrary to popular opinion, Enoch not only walked and talked with God, but he also left behind a written record of the history of all mankind's activities—past, present, and future. Adam and Eve were never totally abandoned by God just because He expelled them from the Garden of Eden. Isaac was very much aware of what his father Abraham was doing when the two of them made their way to the top of Mount Moriah. And Tiberius Caesar actually put Pontius Pilate on trial for allowing Jesus to be railroaded by religious leaders under his jurisdiction.

These are just some of the amazing things you will discover for yourself in *Tales of Forever: The Unfolding Drama of God's Hidden Hand in History*, where you will finally find answers to questions you have wondered about your whole life, not to mention a few that you never even thought to ask. Like marvelous links in a chain of time, these *Tales* provide an unprecedented view into our historic past, unlike anything you have ever experienced before. So prepare yourself for a starkly original journey beyond the veil of time and space; because instead of analyzing the past in a merely abstract manner, the reader of this book will experience firsthand the events of antiquity through the very lives of those who have inhabited our biblical past. As nearly as possible, these stories are authentic representations of a timeless wisdom that has been handed down from generation to generation. They are, in fact, stories from a land where all legends and lore collide. They are *Tales of Forever*.

The time has come, then. The players are assembled, the lines have been rehearsed, the stage has been set. All that remains is for you to begin the journey, one page, one chapter, one book at a time. And now, the curtain rises.

THIS CONCLUDES *The Analyses, Part One*. To read further, please refer to the next book in this series, entitled *Tales of Forever: Book Two – The Tales, Part One*. Or, if you prefer, you may read the entire work, which contains all three Acts in a single

volume, by referring to *Tales of Forever: The Unfolding Drama of God's Hidden Hand in History*. To get either of these publications, or to get the eBook version of these texts, please go to *The Lost-Stories Channel*, or Amazon Books.

Additionally, for those of you who are so inclined, it would be greatly appreciated if you could post a positive review of this book on such websites as Amazon and Sacred Word Publishing, in order that others might become aware of its valuable contents. Because this book was not published by a conglomerate-style publishing house, we rely more heavily on word-of-mouth to advertise its importance to others who, like yourself, are searching for books like this. Thank you for your support.

THE CREDITS

At the risk of sounding cliché, I would like to thank God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, Who all must be having the most incredible conversation right now, as usual. Thanks for a world filled with so much interesting and enlightening dialog.

W. Kent Smith, *Tales of Forever*

Acknowledgements

TECHNICALLY, *Tales of Forever* is the second edition of a book published at the turn of the last millennium entitled *Lost Stories for All Ages*. That initial publication, however, pales in comparison to the present volume. Coming in at just under one hundred and seventy pages, *Lost Stories* was a mere echo of what it is today in its present form as *Tales*, which in the decades that followed eventually blossomed to a work of some five hundred and fifty pages. Whereas *Tales* is a multifaceted work, combining both in-depth analyses and full-orbed dramatizations, the original incarnation of *Lost Stories* was comprised only of the sparsest of narratives. That said, this present volume still owes a tremendous debt to its first-edition cousin, and because of that I would like to take the time to acknowledge those individuals whose contributions were invaluable to its creation.

To begin with, I would like thank my father, my mother, and all my family and friends. Without their encouragement and support throughout the years, I could never have completed the arduous task of publishing this work independently. And at the risk of sounding cliché, I would like to thank God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, Who must be having the most incredible conversation right now, as usual. Thanks for a world filled with so much interesting and enlightening dialog, and thanks, especially, for helping me through it all, which is to say, not just with writing this book but also with the "stuff of life." You never cease to amaze me.

As for this latest incarnation, which is now *Tales of Forever*, I would like to thank Scott Weimer for not only taking time away from his busy schedule to read the manuscript in its most primitive form but also for always instilling in me the much-needed sense of confidence that I was heading in the right direction.

Also, I would like to thank a special friend and colleague who offered his talents to this work in both of its incarnations, as *Lost Stories of All Ages* and *Tales of Forever*. That person is Dennis Tracy. From start to finish, Dennis always made sure that I never lost sight of my originally stated purpose of creating a narrative that was not only professional but also read-

able. While I so often had a tendency to regurgitate the rarefied language of scholarship that I am accustomed to reading while researching the sources for this book, Dennis was always ready, willing, and able to "encourage" me to keep it simple, stupid. Thanks, Skipper.

I would also like to thank the following people who were instrumental in helping procure the right to utilize various quotes throughout this work. Thanks to Nicole Tilford at the Society of Biblical Literature in quoting James I. Cook's *Edgar Johnson Goodspeed*; to Eric D. Snider for his comments on *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*; and to Perry Cartwright at The University of Chicago for a quote from Edgar J. Goodspeed's introduction to his translation of *The Apocrypha*.

So ends my acknowledgement to everyone who was personally involved with the creation of *Tales of Forever*. However, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge several more individuals who greatly influenced this work from afar. In adapting the tales of Enoch, Adam, Abraham, and Pilate, I was greatly affected by two authors and one television writer. The authors are C.S. Lewis and James A. Michener, and the television writer is Rod Serling. For the story of Enoch and his various excursions between Heaven and Earth, I am indebted to Lewis' *The Great Divorce*, and for Adam and his encounters with the many guises of Satan, there are *The Screwtape Letters*. For the tale of Abraham and his journey from Ur of the Chaldees to the Promised Land, I am indebted to Michener's *Caravans* and *Hawaii*. And for the peculiar drama of Pilate and his manifold complications, there are Serling's *Judgment Night*, *Death's Head Revisited*, and *A Quality of Mercy*.

Finally, I would like mention one last individual who just happens to be the man who introduced me to the subject of extra-biblical literature, both by way of his teaching on such diverse subjects as The Spear of Destiny, The Garment of Adam, and Enoch and the Watchers, and his having reissued several of the publications that initially served as source material for this work, specifically *The First Book of Enoch*, *The Book of Jasher*, and *The Book of Jubilees*. That man is Dr. Gene Scott. Prior to my introduction to Doc—as he was best known by his students—I had, in my late teenage years, become fascinated by the subject of biblical chronology, even going so far as to begin work on

a historical timeline, depicting the relationship between sacred and secular events, particularly as they pertained to the genealogy from Adam to Christ and beyond. As it turned out, having begun this enterprise in the early 1980s, this timeline would provide a uniquely instrumental jumping-off point that would make me a prime candidate for Dr. Scott's university-level teaching of God's control of history, particularly as it pertained to the Promises of God, the Lost Tribes of Israel, and The Great Pyramid of Giza.

Recently, I had an opportunity to review some of Doc's teaching from those days, and I was struck by the fact that in one of his nightly broadcasts he spent an entire evening reading from *Jasher*. During this particular program, he was pointing out that even though these books had been deemed non-canonical by the mainstream Church, they nevertheless provided an uncanny, behind-the-scenes view of scriptural events that helped to, as he liked to say, "put flesh and blood" on the people who populated *The Bible*. In no uncertain terms, Dr. Scott stated that, regardless of the fact that such books had been marginalized, it clearly deserved another look, particularly because of its ability to shed new light on such perennial mysteries as to why and how Abraham could have become the father of faith during a time that was so steeped in idol worship. As Doc described Abraham's formative years, in his having been sent as a child to be taught by Noah and Shem, thus providing him with critical knowledge that prepared him for God's eventual call, he then offered an off-handed remark to his audience. And I am paraphrasing: "With all the movies that Hollywood has made about *The Bible*, I wonder why they've never gotten around to bringing stories like this to the big screen." It was then that I realized that that moment was undoubtedly when I began my quest to add this information into the matrix of my own investigation into biblical timelines, Christian typology, and God's control over history. Not only that, but without ever knowing it at the time, it also marked the beginning of an odyssey that would last more than thirty years, one that would eventually culminate in this very work.

So, to those who personally helped me and to those who helped me from afar, I would like to extend my most heartfelt appreciation. I am eternally grateful for all your help in making

a lifelong dream finally become the reality that is *Tales of Forever: The Unfolding Drama of God's Hidden Hand in History*.

W. Kent Smith
Los Angeles, California
May 22, 2016

Selected Biographies

WITHOUT THE groundbreaking work of an intrepid band of discoverers, translators, and scholars, this book would never have been possible. For that reason, the following group must be acknowledged for their achievements, without whose contributions this planet would be a much sadder and bleaker place. Therefore, if this present work has anything to add in the way of enriching, enlightening, or educating the world, it is only because I have been afforded the rare and tremendous honor to, for a moment in time, "stand upon the shoulders of giants."

The Discoverers

Johann Grynaeus (1540-1617) was a Swiss Protestant divine, professor of *The New Testament*, and collector of biblical manuscripts. For more than twenty-five years, Grynaeus exerted tremendous influence on both church and state affairs, acquiring quite a reputation as a skillful theologian of the school of Huldrych Zwingli. His many works include commentaries on various books of *The Old Testament* and *The New Testament* as well as an exhaustive collection of patristic literature entitled *Orthodoxographa* (1569), from which we get the present-day version of *The Gospel of Nicodemus*.

Giuseppe Assemani (1687-1768) was a Lebanese Orientalist and Vatican librarian. Serving as a scribe of Oriental manuscripts, Assemani was sent, in 1715, to Egypt and Syria in search of valuable parchments. Two years later, he returned with one hundred and fifty choice documents, which then became part of the Vatican Library. This success eventually induced Pope Clement XII to send him east again, some twenty years later, and this time Assemani returned with a collection that was even more ancient and more valuable than his first trip. It was among this cache of manuscripts that he discovered a work attributed to Ephrem the Syrian, entitled *The Cave of Treasures: The Book*

of the Succession of the Generations (c. 350), which later scholars determined bore an uncanny similarity to *The First Book of Adam and Eve*.

James Bruce (1730-1794) was a Scottish explorer and travel writer. Having spent more than a dozen years in North Africa and Ethiopia, Bruce, among other things, traced the origins of the Blue Nile. An examination of Oriental manuscripts at an early age led him to the study of Arabic and Geez, and eventually would determine his future career. Apart from his travels up the Nile River, Bruce also managed to bring back a collection of rare Ethiopian manuscripts, which, according to British historian Edward Ullendorff, "opened up entirely new vistas for the study of Ethiopian languages and placed this branch of Oriental scholarship on a much more secure basis."[232] Among this collection of at least twenty-six manuscripts were the Ethiopic versions of *The First Book of Enoch*, *The Book of Jubilees*, and *The First and Second Books of Adam and Eve*.

E.A. Wallis Budge (1857-1934) was a British Egyptologist, Orientalist, philologist, and author. Working for the British Museum, Budge made numerous trips to Egypt and the Sudan, where he was able to procure a great many objects of antiquity, which in turn helped to build up the museum's collection of cuneiform tablets, manuscripts, and papyri. His various publications on Egyptology helped bring a knowledge of these discoveries to a much larger audience. In 1920 he was knighted for his services to Egyptology and the British Museum. Perhaps his best-known work, which also incorporated his skills as a translator, was *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* (1895), while one of his lesser-known, though no less significant, was his translation of *The Book of the Cave of Treasures* (1927).

The Translators

William Wake (1657-1737) was a British clergyman, dean at Exeter, bishop at Lincoln, and archbishop of Canterbury. According to biographer Joseph Hirst Lipton, Wake was said to be "a man of wide reading, immense industry, and liberal and

232 *James Bruce*, Edward Ullendorff, p. 133

tolerant spirit."[233] Of his numerous writings, his most important work was an anthology entitled *The Genuine Epistles of the Apostolic Fathers* (1693), which includes the first English translation of *The Gospel of Nicodemus*.

Richard Laurence (1760-1838) was a British Hebraist and Anglican churchman. He was made regius professor of Hebrew and canon of Christ Church at Oxford, in 1814, and archbishop of Cashel, Ireland, in 1822. According to biographer Gordon Goodwin, Laurence's "writings are a model of exactness and judicious moderation. His erudition is well illustrated by the three volumes in which he printed, with Latin and English translations, Ethiopic versions of apocryphal books of *The Bible*, which include *The First Book of Enoch* (1821) from the manuscript Scottish explorer James Bruce brought from Abyssinia and presented to the Bodleian Library."[234]

Moses Samuel (1795-1860) was a British author and translator of Hebrew works. According to *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, Samuel "acquired a considerable reputation as a Hebrew scholar and an authority on rabbinical literature."[235] From an early age, Samuel had a talent for mathematics and languages, speaking twelve languages in all. He is best known for having been the originally anonymous translator of a 1625 Hebrew edition of *The Book of Jasher* (1838) into English, printed in Venice, after becoming convinced by the core of the work that it was the same book referenced in Scripture.

S.C. Malan (1812-1894) was a British biblical scholar and linguist of Oriental languages. Malan was greatly occupied with theological controversy, and published some of his most valuable work illustrative of the Christian East, especially translations from the Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, and Georgian literatures. According to biographer Cecil Bendall, "In practical knowledge of Oriental languages, Malan had no equal in En-

233 *Dictionary of National Biography*, Joseph Hirst Lipton, 1885-1900, Volume 58

234 *Dictionary of National Biography*, Gordon Goodwin, 1885-1900, Volume 32

235 *The Jewish Encyclopedia: Samson-Talmid Hakam*, Isidore Singer, Cyrus Adler (Editors), Funk and Wagnalls, 1860, p. 24

gland, and probably none in the world."[236] Among his more than fifty publications was his English translation of the Ethiopic works of *The First and Second Books of Adam and Eve* (1882).

William Wright (1830-1889) was a British Orientalist and professor of Arabic at Cambridge. He early developed a fondness for Oriental languages, devoting his main efforts to Syriac, but also acquiring a knowledge of all the Semitic languages together with Sanskrit. Many of Wright's works on Syriac literature are still in print and of considerable scholarly value. As a result of his extensive scholarship, he produced such works as *Contributions to the Apocryphal Literature of The New Testament* (1865), from which we have the first English translation of *The Letters of Herod and Pilate*.

B. Harris Cowper (1822-1904) was a British archeologist, historian, and translator. As an archeologist, Cowper is credited with having discovered Loughton Camp, an Iron Age hill fort in England, dating from around 500 B.C. As a translator, his work appears in *Apocryphal Gospels and Other Documents relating to the History of Christ* (1865), which gave us English versions of *The Epistles of Pilate to Tiberius Caesar*, *The Trial and Condemnation of Pilate*, and *The Death of Pilate, who Condemned Jesus*.

W.R. Morfill (1834-1909) was a British professor of Slavonic languages at Oxford. He also became curator of the Taylor Institution and was appointed a Fellow of the British Academy in 1903. Writing in his obituary, Sir James Murray said, "We lose in him a unique scholar, whose knowledge of the Slavonic languages was greater than that of any other Englishman, so far as I know." Besides Morfill's various books on Slavonic grammar, he provided, at the behest of R.H. Charles, the English translation of *The Secrets of Enoch* (1896), sometimes designated *The Slavonic Enoch* or *The Second Book of Enoch*.

R.H. Charles (1855-1931) was an Irish biblical scholar and theologian. He gained a Doctor of Divinity and was professor of biblical Greek at Trinity College. Charles is known particularly for English translations of apocryphal and pseudepigraphal

236 *Dictionary of National Biography*, Cecil Bendall, 1901 Supplement

works, which includes both *The Book of Jubilees* (1895) and *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (1908).

The Scholars

Theophilus of Antioch (c. 120-181) was a Syrian theologian, apologist, author, and chronologist. The seventh bishop of Antioch, Theophilus was a prolific writer whom Eusebius, Jerome, Lactantius, and others mention in reference to his numerous works against the prevailing heresies of the time, of which only his three-volume *Defense of Christianity* (c. 175) survives to this day. Cited as the founder of the science of biblical chronology, he calculated the period from Adam to Christ at about 5,500 years, using a dating system derived from *The Septuagint*.

Julius Africanus (c. 160-240) was a Libyan historian and traveler. He is important primarily because of his influence on Eusebius, all the later writers of biblical history among the Church Fathers, and the entire Greek school of Christian chronologists. He wrote a history of the world entitled *Chronographia* (c. 222) in which he calculated the period from Creation to Christ as 5,500 years. This reckoning of time led to numerous creation eras being used in the Greek Eastern Mediterranean that placed Creation within one decade of 5,500 B.C. Although his history is no longer extant, copious extracts from it can found in the works of Eusebius, Georgius Syncellus, Georgius Cedrenus, and others.

Hippolytus of Rome (c. 170-235) was a Greek theologian, apologist, and chronologist. Hippolytus' voluminous writings embrace the spheres of exegesis, homiletics, apologetics, polemics, and chronography. As an important figure in the development in Christian eschatology, his *Commentary on the Prophet Daniel* is the oldest extant treatise on Scripture. In it, Hippolytus stated that, based on an interpretation on Moses' construction of The Ark of the Covenant it could be determined that the Christ was predicted to arrive on the Earth 5,500 years after the Fall of Adam.

Ephrem the Syrian (c. 306-373) was a theologian, deacon, and hymn writer. His works are hailed by Christians throughout the world, and many denominations venerate him as a saint.

Ephrem has been declared a Doctor of the Church by Roman Catholics and is especially beloved in the Syriac Orthodox Church. His hymns, poems, sermons in verse, and prose biblical exegesis were works of practical theology for the edification of a church in troubled times. He is considered the most significant Church Father of the Syriac tradition.

Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) was an Italian historian, political philosopher, and apologist of classical antiquity. Recognized as one of the greatest Enlightenment thinkers, Vico famously criticized the development of modern rationalism. Best known for his *magnum opus* entitled *New Science* (1725), he is generally regarded as the father of social science, having inaugurated the modern school of the philosophy of history.

George Smith (1800-1868) was a British historian, theologian, and author. According to biographer William Prideaux Courtney: "All his life he was a diligent student, and he was famed throughout Cornwall for his powers in speaking and lecturing. In 1823 he became a local preacher among the Wesleyan Methodists, and for many years before his death was one of the leading laypersons in that society."[237] A member of the Royal Asiatic Society, the Society of Antiquaries of London, and the Royal Society of Literature, he wrote, among other titles, *An Attempt to Ascertain the True Chronology of the Book of Genesis* (1842) and *The Patriarchal Age* (1854).

Joseph A. Seiss (1823-1904) was an American theologian, Lutheran minister, and author. Among his more than one hundred published works, perhaps his best-known are *The Great Pyramid of Egypt: Miracle in Stone* (1877) and *The Gospel in the Stars* (1882). In addition to pyramidology, Seiss was a Christian dispensationalist, a nineteenth-century millennialist school of thought, which viewed history as a series of covenants with God and which became the basis for beliefs widely held by contemporary evangelical Christians.

E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913) was a British clergyman and theologian. Educated at King's College, London, he was a recognized

237 *Dictionary of National Biography*, William Prideaux Courtney, 1885-1900, Volume 53

scholar in the field of biblical languages, and in 1881 the archbishop of Canterbury Archibald Tate granted him an honorary Doctor of Divinity in recognition of his scholarship. As an outspoken theologian, Bullinger's views were often unique and sometimes controversial. Among his numerous publications the most noteworthy are *The Witness of the Stars* (1893) and *Number in Scripture: Its Supernatural Design and Spiritual Significance* (1921).

Louis Ginzberg (1873-1953) was a Lithuanian professor of Judaism, a Talmudist, and a leading figure in conservative Judaism. As a result of his impressive scholarship in Jewish studies, Ginzberg was one of sixty scholars honored with a doctorate by Harvard University. The author of a number of scholarly works, he is probably best known for his four volume work, *The Legends of the Jews* (1913), which is an original synthesis of classical rabbinical, apocryphal, pseudepigraphal, and early Christian literature.

Edgar J. Goodspeed (1871-1962) was an American theologian and scholar of Greek and *The New Testament*. For many years, Goodspeed taught at the University of Chicago, and is best remembered for his various modern translations of *The Bible,* such as *The Apocrypha: An American Translation* (1938), all of which stressed an emphasis on updating the archaic language of the original texts into the present-day vernacular English.

Cyrus H. Gordon (1908-2001), was an American biblical scholar and professor of ancient Near East culture and languages. Best known for his key role in the decipherment of Ugaritic, an ancient Semitic language of fourteenth-century B.C., Gordon's contribution has been called "the greatest literary discovery from antiquity since the deciphering of hieroglyphics and cuneiform."[238] With his textbooks in hand, later scholars have since been able to penetrate the meaning of numerous biblical Hebrew texts and discover striking parallels between the culture of ancient Israel and its neighbors. Prior to Gordon's pioneering work of synthesizing biblical and ancient Near East studies, most scholarship assumed that early civilizations such as Israel

238 *The Ancient Near East*, Cyrus H. Gordon, p. 99

and Greece existed as entirely segregated entities, but that basic assumption completely changed with Gordon's publication of *The Common Background of Greek and Hebrew Civilizations* (1965), which boldly challenged the prevailing theories of the day.

Source Material

THE FOLLOWING titles represent a list of the various sources from which this present work is derived. They include written sources as well as audio and visual ones; while written sources range from the apocryphal to the scholarly and the Internet, audio visual sources range from art to film.

Apocryphal

The First Book of Adam and Eve, also called *The Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*, and *The Second Book of Adam and Eve*, translated by S.C. Malan, 1882

The Book of Enoch, also called *The First Book of Enoch*, translated by Richard Laurence, 1821

The Secrets of Enoch, also called *The Slavonic Enoch* or *The Second Book of Enoch*, translated by W.R. Morfill, 1896

The Book of Jasher, also called *The Book of the Upright*, translated by Moses Samuel, 1838

The Book of Jubilees and *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, translated by R.H. Charles, 1895 and 1908, respectively

The Gospel of Nicodemus, formerly called *The Acts of Pontius Pilate*, translated by William Wake, 1693

The Letters of Herod and Pilate, translated by William Wright, 1865

The Epistles of Pilate to Tiberius Caesar, *The Trial and Condemnation of Pilate*, and *The Death of Pilate, who Condemned Jesus*, translated by B. Harris Cowper, 1867

Art

The Creation of Adam, Michelangelo, 1512

Scholarly

New Science, Giambattista Vico, 1725

The Common Background of Greek and Hebrew Civilizations, Cyrus H. Gordon; W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1965

Edgar Johnson Goodspeed: Articulate Scholar, James I. Cook; Scholars Press, 1981

The Apocrypha: An American Translation, Edgar J. Goodspeed; The University of Chicago, 1938

The Criswell Study Bible, W.A. Criswell (Editor); Criswell Center for Biblical Studies, 1979

The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of The Old Testament, Volume 2, R.H. Charles; Clarendon Press, 1913

A Dissertation on Sacred Chronology, Nathan Rouse; Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1856

Dictionary of the Middle Ages, Volume 1: Aachen to Augustinism, Stephen A. Barney (Contributor), Joseph R. Strayer (Editor); Charles Scribner's Sons, 1982

The Epistle to Can Grande, Dante Alighieri, 1319

Icons of the Middle Ages: Rulers, Writers, Rebels, and Saints: Volume 1, Elizabeth K. Haller (Contributor), Lister M. Matheson (Editor); Greenwood Publishing, 2012

Spiritual Gems: The Mystical Koran Commentary, Jafar al-Sadiq; Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2011

The Legends of the Jews, Volume 2, From Joseph to the Exodus, Louis Ginzberg; The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1913

The Witness of the Stars, E.W. Bullinger; Kregel Publications, 1893

Profiles of the Future, Arthur C. Clarke; Bantam Books, Inc., 1961

Screening Out the Past: The Birth of Mass Culture and the Motion Picture Industry, Lary May; The University of Chicago Press Books, 1983

Seventy Years at the Movies: From Silent Films to Today's Screen Hits, David Robinson (Consulting Editor); Crescent Books, 1988

The Many Faces of Christ: The Thousand-Year Story of the Survival and Influence of the Lost Gospels, Philip Jenkins; Basic Books, 2015

The Making of the English New Testament, Edgar J. Goodspeed; The University of Chicago Press, 1925

Romantic Quest and Modern Query: A History of the Modern Theater, Tom F. Driver; Delacorte Press, 1970

The Ancient Near East, Cyrus H. Gordon; W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1965

Internet

The Jewish Encyclopedia, William Bacher, Kaufmann Kohler, J. Frederic McMurdy (Executive Committee of the Editorial Board); JewishEncyclopedia.com, 1906

On the Film: The Passion of the Christ, Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia, 2015

What's the Big Deal?: Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, Eric D. Snider; Film.com, 2011

Film

The Ten Commandments, Aeneas MacKenzie, Jesse Lasky, Jr., Jack Gariss, Frederic M. Frank, Dorothy Clarke Wilson, J.H. Ingraham, A.E. Southon; Paramount, 1956

Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, William Goldman; 20th Century Fox, 1969

The Longest Day, Cornelius Ryan, Romain Gary, James Jones, David Pursall, Jack Seddon; 20th Century Fox, 1962

Dances With Wolves, Michael Blake; Orion, 1990

The Passion of the Christ, Mel Gibson, Benedict Fitzgerald, William Fulco; 20th Century Fox, 2004

Gone with the Wind, Sidney Howard, Margaret Mitchell; MGM, 1939

Jaws, Peter Benchley, Carl Gottlieb; Universal, 1975

Goldfinger, Richard Maibaum, Paul Dehn, Ian Fleming; United Artists, 1964

Shane, A.B. Guthrie, Jr., Jack Sher, Jack Schaefer; Paramount, 1953

The Searchers, Frank S. Nugent, Alan Le May; Warner Bros., 1956

The Godfather, Mario Puzo, Francis Ford Coppola; Paramount, 1972

Permission to Reprint

MOST OF THE TEXTUAL material that has been reprinted or adapted in this work resides in the public domain or has been utilized according to the practice of "fair use," and in lieu of this fact, there has been no copyright infringement involved in its incorporation. As for those works that are not deemed as such, the following permissions have been graciously granted to the author of this publication.

Excerpts from the 1981 edition of *Edgar Johnson Goodspeed: Articulate Scholar* by James I. Cook has been reprinted with permission from The Society of Biblical Literature.

An excerpt from the 2011 Internet article on *What's the Big Deal?: Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* has been reprinted with permission from its author, Eric D. Snider.

An excerpt from the 1938 edition of *The Apocrypha: An American Translation* by Edgar J. Goodspeed was reprinted with permission from The University of Chicago.

Cast of Characters

A

Abednego, type of Christ 127, 135, 145
Abraham 7, 33, 66, 72, 91, 93, 97, 101, 112, 121, 145, 151, 156, 157, 162, 183, 185
  father of faith 87, 183
  father of many nations
    father of Isaac 137, 145, 183
  great-great-grandson of Reu 90
  son of Terah 182
  type of Christ 138
    type of God 86, 97
  uncle of Lot
    uncle of Sarah 183
Abraham Lincoln 14, 79
Abraham, sons of
  Isaac 33, 72, 88, 91, 92, 93, 112, 121, 130, 135, 137, 145
    patriarch 66
    son of Abraham and Sarah 87, 137, 145, 183
      faithful son of Abraham 93
    son of faith 87
    type of Christ 87, 88, 91, 93, 97, 135, 138
  Ishmael 89
Adam i, 1, 7, 8, 23, 35, 36, 56, 57, 60, 63, 66, 67, 68, 75, 79, 80, 82, 84, 85, 150, 156, 157, 162, 185
Adam and Eve, children of 2
  Abel 58
    brother of Cain 58, 182
  Cain 58, 112
    brother of Abel 58, 182
Albrecht Dürer, German Renaissance artist 141
Amos 69
Andrea Montegna, Renaissance artist 141
angels 32
Annas 57, 85
Anti-Christ 138
  substance of Nimrod
    substance of Herod the Great 138
    substance of Pharaoh 138
Archibald Tate, archbishop of Canterbury 199
Arthur C. Clarke, English physicist and science fiction writer 78
Asaph, psalmist 53, 54

B

Balaam 140
Benjamin Franklin 124
B. Harris Cowper 18, 184, 196
  British archeologist 18, 184, 196
  historian 18, 184, 196
  translator 184, 196
    translator of the English version of *The Epistles of Pilate to Caesar, The Trial and Condemnation of Pilate & The Death of Pilate, who Condemned Jesus* 184, 196
Bible, scholars of the 199
Bithiah, daughter of Pharaoh 172
  adoptive mother of Moses 172
Buddha 131
Butch Cassidy 161, 162

C

Caesars, the
  Tiberius Caesar 74, 77, 78, 80, 185
Caiaphas 56
Canaan 66
  grandson of Abraham 64
Cecil B. DeMille 173
  American film director
    director of *The Ten Commandments* 173
Charlton Heston 137
Christians 198
Church Fathers ii, 35, 178
  Ambrose 178
  Augustine 178
  Clement of Alexandria 178
  Ephrem the Syrian 2, 18
    deacon 19
    hymn writer 19
    theologian 19
  Hippolytus of Rome 18
    apologist 18
    chronologist 18
    Greek theologian 18
  Jerome ii, 28, 178
  Justin Martyr ii
  Tertullian ii, 178
  Theophilus of Antioch 18
    apologist 18
    author 18
    chronologist 18
    Syrian theologian 18
  Venerable Bede 36
Cinderella 80
Clark Gable 161
Confucius 131
C.S. Lewis 216
C.S. Lewis, author 190
Cush 67
  son of Ham 66
    firstborn of Ham 67
    grandson of Noah 66
Cyrus H. Gordon 19, 87, 199, 200
  American biblical scholar 19, 62, 199
  professor of ancient Near East culture and languages 19, 27, 199

D

Daniel, prophet 59
Dante Alighieri 47, 142
  literary icon of the western world 47
    greatest poet of medieval Europe 142
David J. Hess iii
David, king of Israel 63, 75, 76, 94, 138
  servant of God 103
  type of Christ 138
David Robinson 130
Debbie Edwards 167, 168
  adoptive sister of Martin Pawley 167
  niece of Ethan Edwards 167
D.W. Griffith, American film director 128

E

E.A. Wallis Budge 18, 194
  author 18, 194
  British Egyptologist 18, 194
  Orientalist 18, 194
  philologist 18, 194
Edgar J. Goodspeed 19, 28, 153, 159, 160, 162, 163, 203
  American theologian 19, 199
  scholar of Greek 19, 199
    scholar of *The New Testament* 19
Edward Ullendorff, British historian 194

Elijah 115, 116, 118, 132
  messenger of God 116
  prophet 98
  type of John the Baptist 116, 118
Elisha 132, 133
Elizabeth K. Haller
Enoch ii, 7, 8, 57, 60, 76, 84, 91, 94, 116, 138, 151, 159, 178, 179
  divine mediator 179
  father of Methuselah, Regim, Riman, Uchan, Chennion and Gaidad
    father of Methuselah 67
  messianic figure 148
  narrator of *The Tales* 38, 156
  scribe 7, 9, 38, 179
  seventh from Adam 33
  son of Jared 67
  type of Christ 179
Enoch, angelic escorts of 91
Eric D. Snider, Internet film critic 161
Ethan Edwards 167, 168
  Civil War veteran 167
  uncle of Debbie Edwards 167, 168
    adoptive uncle of Martin Pawley 167, 168
Eve i, 56, 57, 60, 63, 82, 84, 148, 149, 156, 162, 185
E.W. Bullinger 19, 69, 70
  British clergyman 19, 198
  Doctor of Divinity 199
  theologian 19, 198
Ezra, scribe 34

F

Fathers, the 54
  forefathers 54
Flavius Josephus, 1st-century Jewish historian 29
Frank Crane 38, 39

G

Gene Scott 190, 191
George Patton, American World War II general 11
George Roy Hill, American film director 161
  director of *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* 161
George Smith 19, 198
  author 19, 198
  British historian 19, 198
  theologian 19, 198
George Washington 79
Giambattista Vico 19, 21, 198
  18th-century Italian scholar 180
  apologist of classical antiquity 19, 198
  father of social science 198
  Italian historian 19
  political philosopher 19, 198
Giuseppe Assemani 18, 193
  Lebanese Orientalist 18, 193
    scribe of Oriental manuscripts 193
  Vatican librarian 18, 193
Godhead, the 148
  God ii, 1, 52, 63, 67, 72, 73, 76, 80, 103, 187
    Almighty, the 91, 117
    Ancient of Days 32
    Author of the Universe 146, 148, 149
    Cosmic Director of the Universe 87
    Father 53, 88
      Divine Father 87
    God of *The Bible* ii, 25, 26, 37, 39, 122, 126, 133, 151
    God of Set Times 60
    King of Heaven 34
    Lord 1, 70, 92, 93, 103, 117, 120, 127

Lord of Heaven and Earth 53
Lord of the Harvest 118
Lord of Time 132
One, the 17, 26, 39, 123
substance of Abraham 87, 97
Holy Spirit 73, 109
Spirit of God 33, 49, 149
Spirit of the Lord 140
Spirit of Truth 149
Jesus i, 14, 15, 16, 25, 29, 30, 32, 56, 76, 80, 94, 113, 121, 131, 136, 144, 187
Author of Life 148
Author of Faith 148
Author of Salvation 148
Author of the Universe 148
Christ 1, 4, 8, 23, 26, 33, 34, 35, 36, 46, 57, 68, 74, 81, 82, 85, 86, 87, 111, 113
Kinsman Redeemer 118
Messiah i, 15, 34, 56, 57, 59, 82, 85, 101, 105, 117, 126, 139, 171
Redeemer 36
Savior 1, 79
Christ Child 104
Conquering Hero 70
Good Shepherd 88
Hero of Heaven 69
Incarnate Word 54
Jesus of Nazareth 56, 79, 97, 110, 132, 136, 137, 143, 183
King of Heaven
Messianic King 87
Lamb of God 69, 79, 80, 120, 137, 138
Light
Light of the World 103
Lord 116
Lord of Life 119
Lord of Resurrection 119
Lord of the Sheep 115
Man of Substance 85
substance of Isaac 87, 97
substance of Jonah 85
substance of Joseph 95, 111
Messenger of the Covenant 117
Nazarene 76, 121
One, the 14, 44, 82, 103, 118
Only-Begotten Prophet 33
Prince of Peace 107
Risen One, the 145
Shepherd of Israel 104
Shepherd-King of Nazareth 99
Son of God 34, 57, 88, 93, 98
Son of Man 31, 32, 33, 80, 83, 85, 98, 115, 116, 143, 148
Suffering Servant 70
Word of God 7, 68, 134, 148, 150
pre-incarnate Jesus 68
Goldfinger 165, 166
Goliath, post-Flood giant 112
Gordon Goodwin, biographer 195

H

Herod the Great 104, 137, 138, 139
type of Anti-Christ 138
Herod the Great, sons of
Herod Antipas 73
H.G. Wells 179
historians, early Church 197
Julius Africanus 18
chronologist 18
Libyan historian 18
traveler 18
Hosea, prophet 6
Huldrych Zwingli 193

I

Isaac, sons of
Esau 65, 66, 71, 72, 78, 82, 84, 112, 120

brother of Jacob 65
firstborn of Isaac 65
son of Isaac and Rebecca
favorite son of Isaac 66
grandson of Abraham 151
the hunter 65
twin grandson of Abraham 64
Jacob 33, 58, 65, 112, 120
father of Benjamin 99
husband of Rachel 108
twin grandson of Abraham 64
usurper 65
Isaiah, prophet 39, 52, 54, 101, 149
Israel 199

J

Jack Wilson, hired gun 167
Jacob, sons of 95, 101, 105–107, 111, 121
twelve pillars of the House of Israel 112
Benjamin 96, 98, 101, 104, 106, 110–112
beloved of the Lord 109
light-bearer son of Jacob 103
only brother of Joseph by Rachel 95
son of Jacob and Rachel 99, 101
type of Christ 104
type of the disciples of Jesus 104, 106, 109, 110, 111, 119
type of the first "seers" of Christ 102
younger brother of Joseph the son of Jacob 98, 107, 111
youngest son of Jacob 33, 95
youngest son of Jacob and Rachel 106, 108
Gad 58
Joseph 58, 94, 95, 96, 98, 112, 145
chief of the ten tribes to the north 109
dreamer 121
older brother of Benjamin 98
type of Christ 94, 97, 98–100, 104, 111, 121, 138
viceroy of Egypt 59, 94, 97, 99, 106, 107, 109, 135
Judah 104–106, 106, 109, 112
chief of the two tribes to the south 109
Levi 112
Naphtali 101
Simeon 58
Zebulun 101
sixth son of Jacob and Leah 58
Jafar al-Sadiq, Muslim scholar and Imam 47
James A. Michener, author 190
James Bond 165, 166
Agent 007 166
James Bruce 18, 194
Scottish explorer 18, 178, 194, 195
travel writer 18, 194
James I. Cook 28, 153, 159, 160–162, 170
James Murray 196
James Ussher, archbishop 7, 8, 35
Jeremiah, prophet 60, 98, 104, 115
Jesus, apostles of
John 44, 75, 110, 126, 148
Luke 54, 143
Mark 54
Matthew 30, 49, 54, 104, 116, 143, 144
Paul 25, 29, 43, 49, 51, 74, 75, 78, 81, 82, 85, 86, 148, 149
Benjamite 102
great interpreter of Scripture 51
minister of Jesus 79
one born out of due time 79
Paul of Tarsus 102
saint 31

Peter 29, 148, 173
Simon the son of Jonah 98
Simon Peter 98
Thomas 125, 126
Jesus, disciples of 54, 97, 98, 102, 106, 110, 112, 113, 119, 125
disciples of Benjamite ancestry 109
substance of Benjamin 111
Job 69
Joe Starrett 167
Johann Grynaeus 18, 193
collector of biblical manuscripts 18, 193
professor of *The New Testament* 18
professor of The New Testament 193
Swiss Protestant divine 18, 193
theologian of the school of Huldrych Zwingli 193
John the Baptist 50, 79, 98, 101, 115, 118, 140
cousin of Jesus 140
prophet 116
messenger of God 116, 117
substance of Elijah 116, 117, 118
type of Christ 140
Jonah 15, 80, 83, 94, 130, 138, 145
prophet 143
type of Christ 85, 145
Jonathan, son of Saul 63
Joseph A. Seiss 19, 198
American theologian 19, 198
Christian dispensationalist 198
author 19, 198
Lutheran minister 19, 198
Joseph Hirst Lipton, biographer 194
Joseph the father of Jesus 87
Joseph the son of Jacob, brothers of 58, 94, 98, 100, 105, 113
type of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel 112
Joshua 41, 62, 171, 173
Judah and Israel, kingdoms of
Children of Israel 47, 82, 98
Hebrews 140, 173
House of Israel 33, 47
Israelites 2, 58, 60, 145, 173
type of the faithful 137
House of Jacob 47
House of Judah 47
people of Israel 116
substance of the brothers of Joseph 109, 111
Judas Iscariot 30, 45, 102
Jude 33
Jules Verne 179

L

Lary May
laypersons 198
Lazarus 133
Leah, mother of Zebulun 58
Longinus, Roman centurion 2
Lord Acton 14, 15
Louis Ginzberg 19, 58, 107, 108, 109
author 199
leading figure in conservative Judaism 199
Lithuanian professor of Judaism 19, 199
Talmudist 19, 199

M

Magi 104
Wise Men, the 139
Malachi 116, 117, 118
Mark Twain 158
Martin Brody, police chief 165
Martin Pawley 167, 168
adopted brother of Debbie Edwards 167

adopted nephew of Ethan Edwards 167
Mary, mother of Jesus 172
Matt Hooper, oceanographer 165
Meshach, type of Christ 135
Methuselah 67
son of Enoch 67
Michael Russell, bishop 35
Michelangelo 2
Mohammed 131
Moses 29, 41, 47, 62, 73, 76, 85, 90, 91, 94, 130, 136, 137, 145, 171, 172, 173
Beloved of the Nile God 172
First Friend of the Pharaoh 172
Hebrew Messiah 171
Christ figure 172
Keeper of the Royal Seal 172
man of mud 172
prince of Egypt 171
shepherd 173
type of Christ 91, 138, 142
Moses Samuel 18, 183, 195
authority on rabbinical literature 195
British author 18, 183, 195
translator of Hebrew works 18, 183, 195
translator of the English version of *The Book of Jasher* 183, 195

N

Nathan Rouse 23, 35, 36
Nefritiri 172
Egyptian princess 172
first love of Moses 172
Nicodemus 141, 142, 177, 184
Nimrod 66, 67, 72, 78, 80, 82, 84, 112, 156, 162
Amraphel 71
king of Babel 71
lord and master over all the sons of Noah 64
mighty hunter and rebel before God 151
mighty hunter before the Lord 67
mighty hunter before the Lord 64
Noah 30, 33, 45, 63, 66, 70, 78, 80, 82, 84
father of Ham 67
father of Shem
father of Ham
grandfather of Canaan 64
Noah, sons of 64, 111
Ham 64, 70, 82
father of Canaan 64
father of Cush 67
Japheth 64
Shem 33, 64, 90, 183
brother of Japheth and Ham 64

O

Oddjob, mute servant of Goldfinger 165
Orion 69
type of Christ 69

P

Pharaoh 112, 137, 143, 171, 173, 183
king of Egypt 139, 171
type of Anti-Christ 138
Philip Jenkins, professor of history at Baylor University 6, 141, 142
Pontius Pilate 56, 73, 77, 78, 80, 85, 151, 184
Pope Clement XII 193
preachers 198
Pussy Galore, pilot of Goldfinger 166

Q

Quint, shark hunter 165

R

Rachel 96, 104
  beloved wife of Jacob 104
  mother of Joseph and Benjamin 104
Rameses, son of Pharaoh 171, 172
Rehoboam, son of Solomon 103
  king of Judah 103
Reu 90
  great-great-grandfather of Abraham 90
  son of Peleg 90
R.H. Charles 18, 30, 31, 196
  Doctor of Divinity 196
  Irish biblical scholar 18, 196
  professor of biblical Greek at Trinity College 196
  theologian 196
  translator of the English version of The Book of Jubilees and The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs 197
Richard Laurence 18, 195
  Anglican churchman 18, 195
  archbishop of Cashel 195
  British Hebraist 195
  canon of Christ Church 195
  regius professor of Hebrew at Oxford 18, 179, 195
  translator of the English version of *The First Book of Enoch* 179
  translator of the English version of The First Book of Enoch 195
Rod Serling, television writer 190
Rufus Ryker, cattle baron 167

S

Samson 139
  Nazarite 139
  type of Christ 139
Samuel 63
Sarah
  mother of many nations
    mother of Isaac 87
  niece of Nahor the Second
    niece of Abraham 183
Satan 68, 103, 172
  devil, the 68, 69, 137
Saul, king of Israel 63
scholars 194
S.C. Malan 18, 182, 195
  British biblical scholar 18, 182, 195
  Oriental linguist 18, 182, 195
  translator of the English version of The First and Second Book of Adam and Eve 182, 196
serpent, the 68, 70
Shadrach, type of Christ 127, 135, 145
Shane 166, 167
Solomon, wisest man in history 9
Stephen A. Barney, professor emeritus of English at the University of California, Irvine 46, 47
Sundance Kid, the 161, 162

T

Tabitha 133
Terah 182
  father of Haran, Nahor and Abraham
    father of Abraham 182

Tom F. Driver, professor emeritus of theology and culture at Union Theological Seminary 175, 180, 181
type of Anti-Christ
  Herod the Great 138
  Pharaoh 138
type of Christ 97, 106, 115, 120, 121, 138
  Abraham 145
  Adam 145
  Benjamin 104
  Enoch 145
  Isaac 88, 91, 93, 97, 145
  Jonah 145
  Joseph the son of Jacob 94, 95, 98, 99, 101, 105, 111, 121, 145
  Moses 91, 138, 142, 145
  Orion 69
  sacrificial lamb of Abraham 137
  Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego 127, 135, 145
type of God 97
  Abraham 87, 97
type of mankind 80
  Pontius Pilate 44
type of the disciples of Christ
  Benjamin 110
type of the disciples of Jesus 106
  Benjamin 105, 106, 109
type of the faithful 137
  Israel 137
type of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel 107, 109, 136, 142

V

Veronica 74, 75, 78, 79, 82, 151
  Berenice 74
Vito Corleone 168, 169
  father of Fredo, Sonny and Michael Corleone 168
  Godfather, the 168
  Sicilian crime lord 168
Vivien Leigh 161

W

W.A. Criswell 29
Watchers, the 178, 179
Werner Keller 216
Weymouth 25
William Barclay 216
William Goldman, American film writer
  writer of *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* 161
William Hales 36
William Prideaux Courtney, biographer 198
William Shakespeare, Bard of Avon 155
William Tyndale 170
William Wake 18, 183, 184, 194
  archbishop of Canterbury 18, 184, 194
  bishop at Lincoln 18, 194
  British clergyman 18, 184, 194
  dean at Exeter 18, 194
  translator of the English version of *The Gospel of Nicodemus* 184, 195
William Wright 18, 184, 196
  British Orientalist 18, 184, 196
  professor of Arabic at Cambridge 184, 196
  translator of the English version of *The Letters of Herod and Pilate* 184, 196
W.R. Morfill 18, 182, 196
  British professor of Slavonic languages at Oxford 18, 182, 196
  curator of the Taylor Institution 196

Fellow of the British Academy 196
translator of the English version
of *The Secrets of Enoch* 182,
196

Y

Yul Brynner 137

About the Author

SINCE 1976, W. KENT SMITH has been an avid student of all things *Bible*, when he began at the tender age of sixteen to read every book on the subject in his father's private collection. By age nineteen, having digested the works of William Barclay, Werner Keller, and C.S. Lewis, Kent embarked upon a lifelong effort that provided the foundation for everything that followed—a biblical timeline that chronicles the history of God's dealing with mankind. As a result of this endeavor, Kent came to the realization that the traditional view of biblical history was fraught with contradictions and inconsistencies, and so required a radically original approach to reconcile such discrepancies.

Then, sometime during the mid-1980s, he was introduced to a body of ancient wisdom literature that unexpectedly steered him in a new direction that provided him with the missing pieces of a puzzle that is nothing less than the epic tale of God's control throughout the long ages of history. This wisdom literature—parabiblical literature, to be more precise—is known as *pseudepigraphal* literature, often called apocryphal literature. As it turned out, this fresh literary infusion opened up a brand-new chapter of biblical history for Kent, and more importantly, provided him with the framework for this very book, *Tales of Forever: The Unfolding Drama of God's Hidden Hand in History*.

Kent lives in West Covina, California, an eastern suburb of Los Angeles. He can be contacted at wkent@loststorieschannel.com, or lodestarcinema@msn.com.